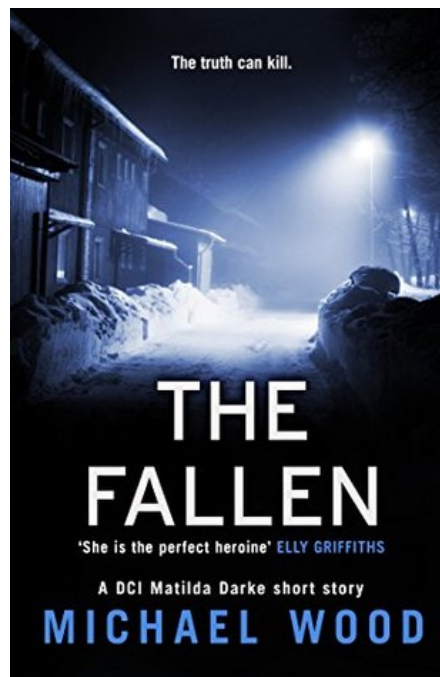




The Fallen

Michael Wood

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‘DCI Matilda Darke is the perfect heroine’ Elly Griffiths

A short story and prequel featuring DCI Matilda Darke, star of Michael Wood’s darkly compelling crime series. Perfect for fans of Stuart MacBride, Mark Billingham and Val McDermid.

It’s Christmas in Sheffield. But not everyone is enjoying the festive season...

A man has been found brutally murdered in his own home. The victim is Iain Kilbride, a once-famous TV star who has faded into obscurity. All signs point to a break-in, but why has nothing been taken?

For DCI Matilda Darke, this is the perfect chance to prove her newly formed Murder Investigation Team are up to the task. Matilda suspects the clue to the finding the killer lies in Iain’s past, but she’s about to discover how dark that past really is...

The Fallen Details

Date : Published December 23rd 2016 by Killer Reads

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Author : Michael Wood

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From Reader Review The Fallen for online ebook

Sarah says

Was nice to read a short story that prequels the Matilda Darke series, the case was interesting with additional twists I hadn't anticipated

Overall as a short story it worked well

Abby Slater- Fairbrother says

Although this may be only a short story what it lacks in size, it certainly makes up for in depth. It's quite surprising once finished, that the writer managed to fit so much into it and a shocking dark twist!

I don't want to review too much as I wouldn't want to give spoilers but if you have previously read the Matilda Darke series there's a moment just a few pages in that you realise what the author meant by 'prequel' and I was excited for this! didn't want to spoil it for other fans of the series.

If you have not read any of the series before, this would be the perfect opener to the series!

I would recommend to fans of the crime genre. I sincerely hope we, the readers are treated to more short stories in the series in future!

The Book Review Café says

All my reviews can be found at <http://thebookreviewcafe.com>

Having read For Reasons Unknown and Outside Looking In which I loved I was delighted to hear that Michael Wood was releasing The Fallen, but once I realised it was only 85 pages long I felt slightly disappointed. I'm not a huge fan of short stories I'm afraid, they often feel rushed or lack the depth of characters and plot. Fortunately this wasn't the case, for such a short book it packed hell of a punch, which made for a quick but never the less a gripping read.

In The Fallen we are introduced to the newly promoted DCI Maltilda Darke, It was fascinating to read about Maltilda's earlier years and her relationship with her husband James, I found this glimpse into her past intriguing as it added another dimension to her character. Maltilda is brought in to investigate the murder of a famous TV star and what follows is an original tale laced with sadness and regrets.

For such a short story I was surprised at just how well it was written, there's enough intrigue and suspense to make this a read in one sitting kind of book. Michael Wood's writing goes from strength to strength, his books appear to be getting darker and more twisted and I absolutely love this element. The Fallen doesn't lack plot or character development in fact it reads, like a full length novel as the author doesn't waste anytime in getting to the heart of the plot.

If you haven't read any books by Michael Wood this short story is well worth a read as you get a feel for Maltilda's character as well as some of the other characters that pop up in both books. If you are already a fan of the author then I'm sure you will love it too. After reading The Fallen I can't wait to read A Room Full Of Killers a full length Matilda Darke book which is published in February 2017.

Linda Strong says

This is a short story prequel to a series that features DCI Matilda Darke. Darke is the new leader of the MIT Division of Homicides.

Shortly after starting her new job, a man has been found in his apartment. It looks like a robbery gone bad, but there was nothing taken. The man was bludgeoned to death. When they identify the man, Darke is surprised to find that he was a soap opera star many years earlier.

For DCI Matilda Darke, this is the perfect chance to prove her newly formed Murder Investigation Team are up to the task. Matilda suspects the clue to finding the killer lies in Iain's past, but she's about to discover how dark that past really is...

The biggest surprise is not the who .. it's more the why. The ending was sensational.

Darke is a great character. Newly married, living in a van while her architect husband redoes their home, she still keeps a sense of humor. She's dedicated to her job and wants a sense of justice and closure for the victims and their families.

There's a lot packed into this well-written short story... and enough information that makes me want to go out and get the entire series (4 full length novels) and have a reading marathon. Highly recommended for anyone who likes crime fiction ... and is looking for a new crime fiction series.

Annette says

A short story to keep our interest until the next DCI Matilda Darke is published. I loved it, reading it in one sitting. I don't usually like short stories but this one has a lot packed into it. Based in and around Sheffield the newly promoted DCI has a lot to live up to leading a new murder investigation team. The assistant chief constable has told her in no uncertain terms that this unit must succeed and that she will be keeping her eye on their work. I love the banter between the team and also Matilda's friendship with the pathologist Adele. Matilda needs all the support she can get as one person in particular is angry and jealous of her appointment to the point of hatred. I am looking forward to the next book as I suspect this will be taken one step further but we will have to wait and see how bad it actually gets.

Mary says

Dear Reader,

I am a huge fan of Matilda Darke and having an opportunity to see her as she is in this wonderful short story almost brought a tear to my eye.

Loved by and equally in love and quite besotted with her darling husband James, we see a glimpse of the Matilda that existed before.....the DCI determined to do her best along with her colleagues in the early days of the MIT, the highly trained police officer hell bent on discovering the sequence of events resulting in the death of Iain Kilbride, and finally the woman, wife, friend and lover, one who was extremely happy with her

lot!!

This story, while very short, packed a wholesome punch, and those believing the weaving of an intriguing, clever, deeply surprising and satisfying plot impossible, in such a tight framework, need only read this masterpiece of storytelling that belies this fact!

A fantastic story, one where past histories and misdeeds come back to haunt a certain individual, we are privy to the sowing of seeds of future animosity, antagonism, spite and hatred in the mind of an officer against one of his own.

I loved this story and urge fellow fans of Matilda to indulge in this literary treat!! Highly recommended!

Sharon says

I'm a huge fan of the Matilda Darke series so I was delighted when Michael released this short story just before Christmas - something to keep me going until book number three comes out!

I'm not a huge short story fan (unless they are connected to a series that I enjoy) as I tend to feel that I'm just getting into something and it is over! However, I think it is a great skill to be able to write a short story as the author has so much that they require to achieve in such a short and compact piece of work. #TheFallen achieves this perfectly.

Set in Sheffield when Matilda has just taken over the post of heading up the MIT, we finally get to meet her husband James and learn of the animosity her new post brought from DI Ben Hale - The Fallen gives us a little of the back story to #ReasonsUnknown and #OutsideLookingIn and provides the reader with a greater insight into who Matilda Darke is as well as the other characters we have come to know and love in Michael's books.

#TheFallen packs it all into 85 pages - suspense, murder, intrigue and twists. The reader will not be left feeling disappointed!

Ellen says

I was so excited when I discovered there was going to be a new Matilda Darke book. This is a short story but the perfect read. It was fantastic to see Matilda and her husband James in the early years. I also loved seeing the start of Matilda's team especially Sian's chocolate drawer. Seeing Matilda and Adele's friendship was a delight. There is also a surprise appearance which made me smile.

This glimpse into Matilda's past was awesome and it was interesting to see her happy.

The case being investigated seems like a classic locked room mystery but there is so much more. Lots of twists and tragedies really build the suspense. I can't wait for the next book in February 2017.

Selene says

Third-person POV ✓

Mature characters ✓

Fast-paced ✓

Nice writing style ✓

The ending was unpredictable but also too neat, tidy, and very convenient.

Diane says

My first exposure to this author - I'm hooked! Even though I'm not a fan of novellas, this one was a very good introduction to DCI Matilda Darke - a witty, compassionate, determined, and very likeable character!

It's the Christmas season, but not so festive for one man! A once famous soap star is found murdered in a run down apartment in a run down neighbourhood. What led to his downfall! DCI Darke has made it her mission to find it out.

4 stars and 2 thumbs up!

Jean says

When a former soap opera idol is found murdered in his flat, newly appointed DCI Matilda Darke begins her commission as head of the Murder Investigation Team at South Yorkshire Police. Michael Wood's short story, *The Fallen*, is a prequel to his wonderful Matilda Darke series and features several favorite (and not-so-favorite) characters.

The body of Iain Kilbride, a 44-year-old coach driver, is discovered by his boss when he fails to show up for work and she talks her way into his building. In a short story, there isn't much time to develop a complex plot; what appears to be a break-in puzzles the police because the victim had very little of value except computer equipment, which was untouched. What, then, was the motive? Matilda and her team get right to work digging into the dead man's past and talking to those who knew him.

Again, this story is only 85 pages, which is not a lot of space to develop characters. However, for those who have read any books in the series, it is a pleasure to see Matilda as a happy newlywed. I say "happy," despite the fact that James, an architect, has decided to do a remodel of their home right before Christmas, which finds them crammed into a tiny RV. James seems to view it as an adventure, while Matilda is quite annoyed by the situation. I had a few chuckles over some of the references, especially the "upright coffin, which was laughably called a shower". Matilda and Adele, the medical examiner, are good friends and had some cheerful, sarcastic exchanges. Sian is a skilled investigator even at this stage, and we get to see the origin of the office candy drawer. On the flip side, there is the beginning of the feud between Matilda and Ben Hales. Grrr! What a nasty man!

It was a treat to see Matilda performing well in her job and having a contented life outside of work. This case turned out to be a difficult one from the standpoint of the victim and his loved ones. Michael Wood handled it well, writing it realistically and sympathetically. The finale seemed a bit far-fetched, but sometimes truth is stranger than fiction, and I honestly could see someone doing this. This is a quick, easy read and one that fans of Michael Wood's Matilda Darke series will love.

4.5 stars

Joanne Robertson says

I just love this series featuring DCI Matilda Darke so was very excited to wake up this morning to find this short story had been delivered to my Kindle in the wee small hours of the morning. Having a few hours free before the madness of Christmas begins, I settled down with coffee and cake to read it-something I don't do nearly enough for books I have bought on their publication day.

The Fallen is a prequel set just before Christmas in 2010. It's a time I remember well (especially the weather conditions!) So I felt the connection straight away with the setting and the general atmosphere. We come to meet the MIT right at its very beginning, with their newly created offices and even witness the birth of Sian's snack drawer (always a favourite of mine!). And we meet a very different Matilda- happy, settled and madly in love with her husband. It actually made me quite sad as I was reading her interactions with James and also with her friend and colleague Adele, as I knew what was ahead for her.

For such a short story, the case that needs to be solved is intricately plotted and hard hitting. There is outstanding attention to detail which adds a realistic edge to Michael Wood's police procedural. I do love this series and can't wait to Book 3 to be published in February. But I am so glad we have had this Christmassy snapshot into a Matilda we've never met before, even if it is bittersweet.

Noelle says

Eeeek! When I heard that Michael Wood was writing a DCI Matilda Darke short story I squealed...yes squealed...with excitement! I adore this character and I love short stories, so this was music to my ears! And that cover! Wow! Dark, eery, mysterious – really draws you to the book!

Set in Sheffield, we are taken back to 2010 when Matilda has just been promoted from DI to DCI. The reader is faced with jealousy, the past, loss/grief, sadness and some uncomfortable topics which the author handles brilliantly!

What I love about Michael Wood is his ability to bring his characters alive with a distinctive voice and unique characterisation. For a short story, you really feel as if you have read a full novel – the plot is enthralling – fast paced, concise and a riveting read that has you hooked from the get go.

What I also loved about this novella is all the foreshadowing that was going on! It is rightly labelled a prequel and if read before any of the other books, you would not understand what I mean by foreshadowing. But as I have read the other books, I was like a giddy, little girl every time another significant 'event' from Book 1 & 2 was revealed! So clever, Mr Wood...so very clever!

We finally get to meet James Darke! And it all becomes clear why in the later books, Matilda is so affected – she loves this guy...deep, unconditional, true love. It is wonderful to see the relationship from the start. Matilda has just made DCI in this novella and so she is still adjusting to her new role. Her sense of humour, determined nature and dedication to her work and home life shines through. She still has some confidence issues but they are not as pronounced in this story as they are in both the novels.

Ooooh, Ben Hale...DI with a massive jealousy streak and a clear dislike of women succeeding in what he sees as clearly a mans role. This quote, to me, perfectly describes Ben Hale's viewpoint: "I'm the carcass,

and you're the vulture" – he says this to Matilda after overhearing a conversation that has his blood boiling-what an arse! Unlikeable from the start, he really does ooze nastiness.

Adele Kean is also another fave of mine. I love her character and her support and friendship is evident from the get go. Although she never has a major part (as such) to play, her impact on the reader is immense.

And Eeeek! We get to meet Jonathan in his pre-book 1 role! The minute his name was mentioned I tensed. That is how significant his character is. But I won't say anymore as ...well...I can't!

The twists in this book were once again phenomenal, I am still gobsmacked by the fact that this author had only released his DEBUT novel around this time last year! Michael Wood is talented, clever and a master at delivering a story that sticks with you!

It should come as NO surprise that I highly recommend this short story and all of Michael Wood's books to date! Simply superb! I am keeping my fingers crossed that Killer Reads will see what a gem of a short story teller Mr Woods truly is! More, please!! (But more novels of course, too!) This is definitely a must read, #bookjunkies, so #BuyThisBook!

Kate~Bibliophile Book Club says

Having read and loved For Reasons Unknown and Outside Looking In, I was delighted to hear that Michael Wood was releasing a short story in time for Christmas.

The Fallen is only 85 pages, but it certainly packs in a decent story. We are with newly minted DCI Matilda Darke in Sheffield, where she is tasked with investigating the murder of Iain Kilbride who was found dead in his flat.

What follows is surprisingly gripping for something so short. I started and finished it this morning as I just wanted to know what happened!

I really enjoyed catching up with Matilda. It was very odd to read about her as a happy character though, she is far from that in previous novels but obviously with good reason. The dynamic between her and her husband James is really well written. Even better though, is her banter with Adele, who is also in the first two books.

The Fallen was a perfect interval for fans of Michael Wood. Especially those fans who are waiting for the next instalment in the DCI Matilda Darke series, A Room Full of Killers, which is out next year. I thoroughly enjoyed it, not least because a certain character makes a fleeting appearance and it made me smile!

Highly recommended!

Sarah says

I am a huge fan of the DCI Matilda Darke series so this was the perfect Christmas present to myself.

Even though it is only a short story the author has managed to pack everything I would expect from a full novel into a short one. It literally has all the elements I would hope for and more.

I love how we see a happier version of Matilda. I think with the story line being one that affected me quite emotionally it was great to have that happy medium that balanced it all out.

The story line itself I totally loved. Being a soap fan, an ex actor from one of the main soaps being found dead grabbed my interest straight away. I never expected the dark and twisted journey that the author took me on and it was one that really tugged at my heart strings. It's brilliantly done and did not expect what so ever what was coming. A huge pat on the back Mr Wood.

If you haven't read the other books in the series it really doesn't matter as this can definitely be read as a stand alone. I think it's a great introduction if you haven't been lucky enough to read this authors books yet and if you are already a fan like me, well you are going to love it.
