



A Pitying of Doves

Steve Burrows

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With murder, everyone pays a price ...

Why would a killer ignore expensive jewellery and take a pair of turtledoves as the only bounty?

This is only one of the questions that piques Chief Inspector Domenic Jejeune's interest after a senior attaché with the Mexican Consulate is found murdered alongside the director of a local bird sanctuary. The fact that the director's death has opened up a full-time research position studying birds hasn't eluded Jejeune either. Could this be the escape from policing that the celebrated detective has been seeking? Even if it is, Jejeune knows he owes it to the victims to solve the case first. But a trail that weaves from embittered aviary owners to suspicious bird sculptors only seems to be leading him farther from the truth. Meanwhile, Jejeune is discovering that diplomatic co-operation and diplomatic pressure go hand in hand.

With two careers hanging in the balance, the stakes have never been higher for Inspector Jejeune. And this time, even bringing a killer to justice may not provide the closure he's looking for.

A Pitying of Doves Details

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From Reader Review A Pitying of Doves for online ebook

Jennifer says

There's plenty wrong with these books, and there was plenty wrong with this particular one. But there was a lot right too with a clever plot full of interesting details. I think Detective Sergeant Danny Maik is rather more interesting than the detective of uncertain rank (DI? DCI?) Dominic Jejeune and find the constant "But I don't wanna be a police officer!" theme rather irritating but it all works for the ending.

Lorna says

Don't ask me what it was but it took me a long time to get through this book. Maybe the birding angle didn't interest me? Maybe it was the writing style? I really don't know. On the surface of it there was nothing wrong with the premise or the plot line. I quite liked Jejeune's character as well as the lesser characters but maybe there was a bit too much emphasis on insignificant details. We know that Jejeune is an enthusiastic birder, but it seems the only time his personality shines through is at the sight of a flock of mute swans, and even whilst solving a murder his focus is on the welfare of birds. Yes, we know, he's in the wrong job. Part of me wants to tell the author to let him go and study birds if that's what he wants to do. I think Burrows would be better writing non-fiction birding guides, the mix of birding and murders just doesn't work for me. It just reads like an account from an enthusiastic birder and there just happens to be murder thrown in. I won't be investing in any others from this series.

Patrick Carroll says

It's a classic mystery that avoids the "noir" aspects of lots of crime novels, leaving you with the logic and convoluted evidence pathways to identify the murderer. Steve Burrows puts quite lot of effort into describing the various characters and is clearly leaving himself "side stories" primed for sequels or branches of the original novels. Entertaining reads so far.

Margaret1358 Joyce says

This is a top-rate police procedural with an interesting angle: a Canadian detective / bird conservationist transplanted to the Norfolk Coast of England where the theft of 2 turtledoves and a double murder keep this guy very very busy. A great read!!

Tonstant Weader says

When reading Steve Burrows A Pitying of Doves: A Birder Murder Mystery, I became convinced he was using writer's software like Scrivener or Dramatica Pro. What drilled it home to me that somewhere in this creation an artificial intelligence was prompting some of the narrative was the repetitive nature of some of the character development. Danny Maik, the closest thing to a partner our lead detective Domenic JeJeune has, likes Motown. How do we know, because it is referenced over and over and over, sometimes

incongruously as in when it is brought up at a work meeting. I imagine a popup window that jumps into place when Maik's name comes up in a new chapter with a reminder to deepen the character by mentioning his love of Motown. Did we mention he loves Motown? How about some Stevie Wonder lyrics? Frankly, it drove me nuts.

Other character development is just plain weird. Holland is made of the flimsiest cardboard—why does he exist? It is already clear that JeJeune is not in sync with his colleagues, we don't need an insubordinate thuggish officer to reinforce that. The academic Dr. Nyce is a walking talking stereotype as imagined by resentful non-academics, predatory, vain, and an intellectual snob. Of course he is!

JeJeune's love interest and live-in love Lindy is a reporter and not interested in birding. Yet she makes bird puns such as "sorts the wheatears from the chaffinches?" Really? Lindy also gets inexplicably angry. You know who else does? All the women in the book. Subordinate Lauren Salter, Carrie Pritchard, and supervisor DCS Shepherd, Margaret Wylde and Luisa Obregón, not one of them avoid losing their cool or falling apart. So many overly emotional women. Lucky for Phoebe Hunter, she is dead before the narrative begins, so we don't see her becoming hysterical. I am using the word deliberately to highlight the presumption of female emotional instability in Burrows' writing.

You can read the rest of this review on my blog here: [https://tonstantweaderreviews.wordpress...](https://tonstantweaderreviews.wordpress.com)

Pgchuis says

3.5* rounded down.

I enjoyed the first half of this novel much better than the first book in the series: things happened, actual detecting went on, people were interviewed, it was actually quite fast-moving. But... then it sort of fizzled out. Weeks went by. Jejeune eventually went on holiday. Jejeune was his usual uncommunicative self; I cannot stress too often what a nightmare he would be to work for. And then there is his bizarre relationship with Lindy, which I find utterly unconvincing - they seem to have no idea who the other really is and don't particularly like or relax around one another.

The solution to the plot was left slightly unknown, but the motivations were in any case a lot of a stretch. I was distracted by the mystery of what exactly Jejeune's brother had done to make him so notorious across an entire continent.

Toni Osborne says

A Birder Murder Mystery #2

This neatly constructed series is quite original intertwining avian with the classic whodunit and doing so in an entertaining way. This second book is a smart and absorbing read. With some series you need to read the novels in sequence, here I suggest strongly doing so otherwise you will need to piece the missing parts and back read.....(this is exactly what I have to do).....

In book 2, we have more bird related murder and mayhem in which the author's ornithological background shines. Chief Inspector Dominic Jejeune, an avid birder and lead investigator is called out at a gruesome scene at a bird sanctuary where a researcher is found dead beside the body of a senior attaché from the

Mexican consulate. You would think this to be a cut and dry investigation but when Powers that Be want to squash any wrongdoing... things turns out not to be that simple.....

To enjoy this mystery you need a certain suspension of belief. The story is a tightly woven plot where every twist seemed to relate back to birding. Of course being heavy on bird information I inevitable learn a good deal about doves. I love birds so more information did not bother me but if you do not maybe you should skip this series all together or maybe give it a try; you may change your mind.

The main character Dominic Jejeune is an extremely complex individual with deep secrets. He often ponders on things, what could trouble him so much....well this second story tease us even more by dropping some clues that say little and leaving us wondering if the sequel will reveal more... or not. The story progresses slowly and as it does I was trying hard to pin point the murderer, I never did work out the whodunit....I really thought it was someone else and certainly I am not alone reaching a wrong conclusion....Quite suspense in its own way “ A Pitying of Doves” is a good and entertaining read.

Wanda says

Second book in the birder murder mystery series and I have enjoyed both of them a great deal. This second installment feels more solid, now that the stage is set and the main characters have been introduced. I like the main character, Domenic Jejeune, despite the fact that he is difficult to get to know, maybe even because he is elusive.

This is another muddy mystery, quite literally as a van has to be hauled out of a marsh. The landscape of Norfolk is very much a character in these books and I'm glad that I have visited there and can picture some of the locations quite clearly. (This could also be an excuse to go back, of course, and reacquaint myself with this lovely birdy part of the world, for as Jejeune notes, birders do like to retrace their steps). Of course the case hinges on the doves of the title—but in an intelligent way, not just a kitschy way. Burrows delves into real conservation issues to provide the clues for his detective. I was fooled for a little while, thinking thoughts about Passenger Pigeons and cloning, a red herring which I am pretty sure Burrows intended. If he didn't, it worked anyway!

I don't think there's a birder out there who hasn't wondered at some point whether s/he could turn the hobby into a source of income. We all flirt with the idea of how wonderful it would be to escape our current employment treadmill to spend every day in the field. Jejeune may be a fabulous detective who can't shut his mind off just because his superior asks him to, but he longs for a change in vocation. Obviously, since there is a third book, he hasn't found an escape just yet! That is also typical—field work doesn't pay very well and being a tour leader has its own kind of drudgery.

Secondary characters are asserting themselves a bit more this time around, and Jejeune's relationship with Lindy assumes greater importance. Is she going to be able to stick with this quiet, obsessed man for the long haul? (Any of us who have dated birder men frequently ask ourselves the same question).

A solid second book, recommended for those who enjoy both mysteries and birding.

Gill Chedgey says

A Pitying of Doves - Steve Burrows

Apparently this is the second in the series of 'Birder Murder' mysteries but not having the read the first one was no barrier to enjoying this one. The crime/thriller/detective genre is in many ways oversubscribed these days and I think a writer needs a unique yet plausible angle to really pique and sustain the interest of those loving this genre. Having an interest in birds myself went a long way to endear this book to me and the writers own love and knowledge of ornithology was almost palpable here so I feel that box is ticked. I was momentarily reminded of Ann Cleeves The Crow Trap but only momentarily.

Inspector Domenic Jejeune is a Canadian detective living in Norfolk and, as is the fashion these days for fictional detectives, is a conflicted, somewhat flawed character. I did wonder sometimes whether he was somewhere on the spectrum as I found him hard to get to know. There were plenty of other characters, maybe as flawed, but somehow more accessible. I also felt there was plenty for development for all of them. My understanding is that there are to be more in the series. Perhaps it would be something of a first to have a whole team as your main 'character' and allow them to develop through a series of novels.

The plot is as twisty and as convoluted as you would wish in a good crime yarn. I also liked the way the ornithology theme was ever present, crucial to the story but not to the extent that it saturated the readers' sensibilities. It would have been easy for that to happen.

It kept my interest going, sufficiently to consider seeking out the first story and I am grateful to Real Readers for the opportunity to read this novel.

Sunny says

As a birder, I enjoyed reading about a main character who cares about birds and nature as much as I do. The book was fairly flat otherwise. It did not have enough mystery for a mystery novel.

Vontel says

It's hard to decide on a rating. The first third of the book seemed to be wandering rather aimlessly and needing some editing, although some of my perception may have been the effect of putting reading it on hold for a while, as well as having already read the third book in the series, which led me back to this one. However, once getting past the first 40% or so of the book, the pace and intensity of the plot certainly picked up. Once again, the author has based the plot on the plight of many bird species globally, and specifically on a particular almost extinct species of dove from an Island off Mexico. That species is pivotal to much heartbreak and death in this mystery. The author raises significant ecological, biological, and social issues which can be of concern to all of us.

Susan says

Chief Inspector Domenic Jejeune investigates a double murder at a bird sanctuary. One victim is a young

woman doing research on the reasons for the precipitous decline of the turtledove population in England. The other is a Mexican diplomat, but Jejeune's superiors are determined to steer him away from any investigation in that direction. The plot is interesting aside from Jejeune's angst about not being an ornithologist. The pace is very leisurely and the suspense minimal.

Helen says

There is more internal dialogue in these stories than you usually get in mysteries. You hear from everyone, too, not just one person and you have to remain alert when the narrator shifts. The characters are good, although when the author has to tell you on every third page how brilliant the detective is one has to wonder. I like Domenic Jejeune and think he is very lucky to have two great interests in his life. He's also very lucky to have Lindy.

The stories are written with bird conservation in mind but you don't have to be a birder to enjoy these portrayals of Norfolk. The Norfolk tourist board should pay Mr. Burrows a subsidy for the work he is doing because his descriptions make the county almost irresistible to a traveler. I searched for Sorocco doves and European turtledoves and discovered that the Sorocco dove is a quite beautiful bird with a fluffy orangey breast, quite different from the turtledoves which are somewhat like rock doves with the blue and grey bars changed to shades of brown it appears. From the pictures you couldn't mistake one for the other. We so often think of "our" birds, the ones we see, but forget that the birds who disappear during winter do not dig homes in river mud but have a second home in some other country and conservation has to involve those second homes as well. Burkino Faso and the European turtledove.

Breakaway Reviewers says

Nom de plumage?!

A Siege of Bitterns, A Pitying of Doves, a Cast of Falcons, a Shimmer of Hummingbirds? With titles like these you might be forgiven for fluffy, feathery, ornithological images flashing through your head. And then again you might not!!

For this series of 'Birder Murder' mysteries seems to be anything but cuddly. To be fair I've only read this second one and to be even fairer still I don't think the third is even published yet, and the fourth may not even be written! But if A Pitying of Doves is anything to go by we may have a fine series of crime stories ahead of us.

Crime and thriller novel series are not hard to find these days but what is harder to find is a series with a unique angle and I think Steve Burrows may have nailed it here.

The key player in this series is Dominic Jejeune a detective of Canadian origin living in Norfolk. What makes him different from other detectives? He's mad about ornithology. And very knowledgeable and passionate about that interest. In fact, he would probably rather be 'birding' than 'detecting'. However, he seems to be as good at the latter as he is the former. His record for solving crime is impeccable. He's a quirky character, more Hamlet than Macbeth, who you never quite feel you've got to know but I think that in this case it arouses a desire to read the other books in the series. There are some tantalising hints that there is more to this man's story than we are to be served in this sitting.

The plot is nicely convoluted involving some diplomatic shenanigans with the Mexican Consulate, (What? In Norfolk? I hear you cry) and the bird theme maintains a constant profile without being overdone. I think that is skilful because it would have been very easy to create an uneven balance.

The other characters, particularly the team that Dominic has working with him all have their issues and hopefully they will be developed through the ensuing series. And other secondary characters are there to play their parts and that may be one weakness. It's almost as if the characters that the writer really cares about have been drawn and depicted with greater depth than the bit part players.

I will be interested to see how this series pans out. I already love the collective noun titles.

A paperback copy of this book was received from Real Readers

Whizz

Whizz reviewed this book for Breakaway Reviewers.

Sarah-Hope says

Last year, I reviewed the first book in Steve Burrows' Birder Murder mystery series, *A Siege of Bitterns*. Since then, I've been waiting eagerly for the next novel in this series. Seriously—I wrote the publisher last summer to say, "You are going to publish more in this series, aren't you? Please tell me you wouldn't let this novel be a one-off." That's how much I liked the first volume.

A Pitying of Doves, the second novel featuring Chief Inspector Domenic Jejeune, is as absorbing and intelligent as its predecessor. Inspector Jejeune, originally from Canada, now lives in a small coastal town in England. He is oddly cursed in his brilliance as a detective: he'd much prefer to be bird-watching. However, having earned national recognition on an earlier case, he faces a steady demand for his services.

A Pitying of Doves has a multi-layered plot. It begins with the murder of an odd pair: a grad student who runs a small bird sanctuary and a senior attaché with the Mexican Consulate. This immediately sends the investigation in several directions. There's the grad student's untrustworthy PhD adviser; the campaign run out of the sanctuary to convince local farmers to set aside land for bird habitat, reducing their production and profits; the widow and son of the reclusive collector of doves, originally from Mexico; more members of the Mexican Consulate; British politicians more concerned with avoiding international slights than with uncovering the murderer; a small-time thief; the former superior officer of one of the sergeants on the case, who severed time in Afghanistan; and the unsteady local woman who insists the sanctuary has stolen birds given to her by her husband.

Jejeune, as always, is tight-lipped and highly rational. There's good reason for any course his investigation takes, but that reason is almost always a complete unknown for those who work with him. The reader, who has slightly more information than Jejeune's investigative team, still is faced with a multitude of questions as the book progresses.

The novel also offers an interesting secondary plot. The grad student had been doing field work in northern Africa studying doves. Now that she's been killed the position is open—and Jejeune would love nothing more than to leave police work for a chance to work as a field biologist.

If you're a fan of mystery novels with rich characterization and complex plots, put A Pitying of Doves at the top of your summer reading list.
