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Tom Bouman's *Dry Bones in the Valley* won the Edgar Award for Best First Novel and a *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize. The *New York Times* hailed it as "beautifully written," and the *Washington Post* called it a "mesmerizing and often terrifying story."

In Wild Thyme, Pennsylvania, summer has brought Officer Henry Farrell nothing but trouble. Heroin has arrived with a surge in burglaries and other crime. When local carpenter Kevin O'Keeffe admits that he shot a man and that his girlfriend, Penny, is missing, the search leads the small-town cop to an industrial vice district across state lines that has already ensnared more than one of his neighbors. With the patience of a hunter, Farrell ventures into a world of shadow beyond the fields and forests of home.

Fateful Mornings: A Henry Farrell Novel Details

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Author : Tom Bouman

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From Reader Review *Fateful Mornings: A Henry Farrell Novel* for online ebook

Thomas Todd says

I was looking forward to reading this follow up to *Dry Bones*, however I was let down. Rural Pennsylvania/New York setting with Henry Farrell returning trying to find out what has happened to a young heroin addicted woman that has disappeared or been killed. This book was very, very slow for me with no flow ever really developing until the last 50 pages or so and even then it was pretty blotchy. Barely a 3 star rating for me as I am chalking this book up as a sophomore failure.

Kerry Clair says

I found this book incredibly boring and tedious. It didn't get good until perhaps the last 30 pages. By that time I was only still reading because curiosity as to who did it kept me there but that's about it. Very dull and slow moving book.

Laura says

The story was segmented, choppy, and lacked flow.

It was bogged down with information about the city, counties, and locale. Which could have been overlooked; except, the details provided were dull and often irrelevant to the storyline.

Actually, the same can be said about most of the side stories. They were uninteresting and added nearly nothing to the plot.

There are about 275 pages of mundane narrative, until an interesting character in Coleman Tod is introduced. However, it's short lived and the conclusion of the story and novel are as lackluster as the first 275 pages.

I really wanted to like this book more than I did, but between the clunky flow and cluttered story building I just couldn't get pulled in and lost in the novel the way I would have wanted.

Robert Intriago says

What a disappointment after a very good first book. had a hard time making head or tail after reading about half. It wanders all over the place with absolutely no direction. Did not finish, therefore no rating.

Nina says

To be honest, I had a little trouble engaging myself into the story. I actually put the book down for a few

weeks to read more uplifting books.

The story was dark and the author was good at depicting a wasteland type setting. Although I tried, I had trouble identifying with any of the characters. I found that the main story moved slowly and the disconnected side stories made it difficult to follow. I have not read anything else this author has written, but I see that he has a great following, so I give him the benefit of the doubt. I won this book through GoodReads and will register it with bookcrossing.com and pass it on to a more appreciative reader.

Craig Sisterson says

We've had to wait a little while for a sequel to Bouman's exquisite, mesmerizing debut *Dry Bones in the Valley* (2014), which won the Edgar Award for Best First Novel and the LA Times Prize, among other accolades.

But at last we're back alongside Office Henry Farrell on his beat among the backwoods and byways of rural Pennsylvania. Farrell is having a trouble-filled summer in *Wild Thyme*. While he'd rather be hunting turkey, drinking IPAs, and playing his fiddle, instead he's busy dealing with the arrival of heroin, a surge in burglaries, and an adulterous fling from which he can't seem to extract himself.

When local handyman Kevin O'Keeffe's drug-addled girlfriend disappears, and O'Keeffe gives a rambling semi-confession to maybe shooting a man, Farrell's life gets even more complicated. He's pulled in all sorts of directions by the various powers and influences in his community, as he tries to sort the truth from everything that obscures. And there's a lot that obscures. His investigations take him across the state border to the backcountry equivalent of vice-filled back alleyways.

Fateful Mornings is an interesting, at times frustrating, read.

Bouman's elegant prose and knack for evoking backcountry life in vivid detail is again on show, but this sophomore effort lacks the tension and narrative drive of his debut.

Dry Bones in the Valley earned comparisons to rural noir masters like John Hart and James Lee Burke, but in *Fateful Mornings* Bouman veers more towards James Sallis territory, with formless and meandering plotting, in among lots of lovely description and characterization. He doesn't quite, yet, have Sallis' touch for making that work, but there's still plenty of quality here.

The plotline is not so much two steps forward, one step back, as one step forward, three to the side, circle back around, and bow to your partner. Bouman's writing is elegant, poetic, and unique, and there are interesting strands of philosophy and different ways of looking at the world threaded throughout, but I can imagine that many readers, whether crime fans or not, may find the storyline's looseness off-putting. I couldn't quite make up my own mind about it, but in the end felt like I admired what Bouman was trying to do rather than fully being engaged in the tale.

Leah says

Beautifully written and quietly ponderous, this second outing for Henry Farrell loses a little something of the first's freshness, but like a good cheese, it gains strength and maturity with age.

Bouman's brilliance is in his use of the landscape as narrative - in a contemplative, procedural way, we know

and feel the fields, the woods, the wind and water with Henry, and just as viscerally we feel the dirty backlot carparks, the houses built under freeways, the soulless mansions and the dying city centres.

And these things are integral to the telling of the story, just as they're integral to Henry's character and the lives of the people he deals with. As with *Dry Bones in the Valley*, we're seeing a community, a county, being reclaimed by the nature it is so aggressively trying to control.

Natural language appears throughout the novel. Thoughts making their way through a character's mind will come out jumbled, half-formed, incoherent; they'll end a sentence with an open question ("Are you coming tonight, or?"). It's unusual to find this mode of speaking written down in novels and I think it should happen more often, because it's such a great reflection of how we all actually behave. But maybe it's more powerful in its sparsity.

I'm not keen on Shelly's husband having a hold over Henry in terms of its proximity to soapy dramatics, so I can only hope that, like the promise of a lady deputy at the end of the first book, this threat is quietly neutralised in the first few pages of the next. Because if you're reading Bouman for blueprint plotting and melodramatic stakes-upping, you're doing it wrong.

Jan says

I found it very difficult to relate to the principal character in the book, & the plot just didn't hang together very well in several places. Some judicious editing could have greatly improved the book in sections where things rambled without clear purpose.

Jeanette says

This has no rating for me. Although I read past the half way point, I defer to give it a bad rating.

It's just not to my taste in reading AT ALL. And the physical prose for *Wild Thyme* locale should entrance or enthrall, but within all the rest of the copy, it just did not suffice to overcome the "voice".

Some of the thoughts made by this Henry Farrell? Not a protagonist that I would want to know or would I care to read this many pages within his lens. Not crude, not evil- just snide trivial and sophomoric! Way too juvenile in petty judgments. I read book #1 and thought it didn't show Henry in this slant HALF as much as this one does. The more I know him here in this book, the less I want to know him. LOL!

On to the next. And better.

Barb says

Wanted to like this book: 1) set in rural Pennsylvania; 2) impact of fracking on community; 3) thought 1st novel was readable.

However, this book really disappointed. I plodded through it just to see if it got better, (It didn't)

Jaime says

I found this book boring and tedious. I love the imagery of the setting (rural Pennsylvania) and the notion that the plot focused on fracking (environmentalist in me). Other than that, I did not like the book at all. The plot was hard to follow and boring. The characters were depressing. I did not like the author's writing style at that much. Sincere thanks to Netgalley for the advanced readers copy of the book.

Kate~Bibliophile Book Club says

Fateful Mornings is the first book I've read by Tom Bouman, but I've had *Dry Bones in the Valley* on my bookshelves since it came out, just waiting to be read. I'll definitely be picking it up at some point having read this one.

In *Fateful Mornings*, we meet Officer Henry Farrell, the central character in these books. Struggling after the death of his wife, he is carrying out an illicit affair with a married woman. Along with this, there is trouble in Wild Thyme. When he is called on to investigate the disappearance of Penny, the girlfriend of an old acquaintance, things take a turn for the worse for Officer Farrell.

Situated on the edge of the woods, Penny's home is on the precipice of a place where there is most definitely something sinister going on. When Farrell starts to nose around, he ends up finding more than he bargained for.

I don't want to say much more for fear of giving anything away. *Fateful Mornings* is a slow and intricate book, with a great sense of location and a wide-ranging cast of characters. The author has an excellent eye for detail, and his prose is second to none. I read *Fateful Mornings* in a day as it was a compulsive and enveloping read.

Recommended!

Paromjit says

Without doubt, this is a beautifully written mystery set in Wild Thyme, a rural place in Pennsylvania, policed by Henry Farrell. There are dark regional omens such as rise in burglaries and the arrival of heroin, and low income poor areas, like the Heights, that are proving to be dangerous to frequent. Heroin addicts, Kevin O'Keeffe and Penny Pellings, have had their baby daughter, Eolande, put into foster care. Kevin is struggling with his memories when he tells Henry that he shot a man and Penny has disappeared, although there was blood and patches of her hair in their trailer. This is not a fast paced read, it is a slow paced, character driven story that meanders, with an impressive sense of location, culture and the seasons. It is a read which at times is more interested in looking at people and the rhythms of nature in depth, and the crime feels incidental.

Henry investigates, venturing into areas that do not welcome cops and across statelines with the stealth of the hunter that he is. His wife is dead, and he still hasn't come to terms with it. His personal life revolves around a married woman, Shelly Bray, which he knows is a mistake and so it proves to be. He is close friends with Ed, who runs a construction company specialising in the use of retrieved timber and deploying traditional

and time consuming techniques, and his wife, Liz, the local GP. When Kevin who works for Ed is locked up in prison, Henry moonlights by working for Ed so that he can complete a contract. Ed, Liz and Henry play in a band, The Country Slippers, with Henry's instrument being the fiddle. Henry comes to find himself slowly getting into a relationship with Julie, a woman he works with as a cop and in his construction job with Ed. Amidst all this is the hunt for Penny, a closer in depth look at Kevin to understand precisely what he did and saw, the enigma that is Sage Buckles, and the emergence of a dangerous man who abducts people and is responsible for killing a cop.

I enjoyed the slow pace of this book that is just soaked with rural vibes and real lives. Henry is a flawed and grieving man who is determined to get to the bottom of what happened to Penny and is undeterred that it takes some time to do so. The author gives us a good idea of the people and issues that arise in many rural areas of the US. We observe the jurisdictional policing nightmares, whilst at the same time seeing the team work that takes place when cases cross statelines. This may not be a novel for everyone, I can imagine many who will be frustrated with the slow pace and a plot that is not driven solely by the crime aspects of the story. However, if you are looking for beautiful and atmospheric writing, rural culture and a focus on characters, then this is for you. Many thanks to Faber and Faber for an ARC.

Chris says

(3)-I was really drawn to the characters, setting and story of "Dry Bones in the Valley", the first book featuring Henry Farrell, an older, low level lawman living in rural northern Pennsylvania. In this follow up, he is investigating a disappearance, playing his fiddle, enjoying his beer and trying to sort out his surprisingly complicated personal life. The characters and setting are still appealing, but I found the "mystery" part of the plot muddled and hard to follow this time around.

Donna says

In Wild Thyme, Pennsylvania, Officer Henry Farrell is the law -- the only cop the town has. Kevin O'Keefe is mostly a druggie and he reports his girlfriend Penny missing. The story meanders along with many subplots.

The author's words are quite descriptive and the countryside is very pretty. I liked the way the author developed Henry's character but the mystery was difficult for me to follow.

I received a copy of this book from a Goodreads giveaway.
