



# Burial

*Neil Cross*

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## **Burial** Neil Cross

How do you live with your guiltiest secret? And what do you do when it comes back to haunt you, threatening to destroy everything? Neil Cross's 'Burial' explores this stark predicament.

## **Burial Details**

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Author : Neil Cross

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## From Reader Review Burial for online ebook

### Sabine says

Nathan und Bob lernen auf einer Party die junge Emily kennen. Völlig zugehörnt und betrunken fahren sie mit ihr in einen kleinen Wald, um ein bisschen Spaß zu haben. Doch dort stirbt das junge Mädchen, Nathan und Bob beschließen, darüber Stillschweigen zu wahren – erst Jahre später scheint die Vergangenheit die beiden einzuholen...

Es geht in diesem Buch gar nicht so sehr darum, einen Mörder zu finden oder Ermittlungen zu führen. Es ist eher ein Psychodrama, eine Charakterstudie: was hat Nathan veranlasst, beim Tod Emilys so zu handeln, wie er es tat und was hat ihr Tod dann mit Nathan gemacht, wie sein Leben beeinflusst und seine Handlungen bestimmt. Dabei schreibt der Autor sehr eindringlich und schonungslos, lässt Einblicke in die Seele Nathans zu. Manchmal konnte ich ihn verstehen, manchmal aber auch nicht. Er hat in mir zum Teil Verständnis ausgelöst, manchmal Unbehagen und häufig Erschrecken. Auch die anderen Charaktere sind gut gezeichnet, sie sind glaubhaft und authentisch. Bildgewaltig beschreibt Neil Cross auch die Umgebung, in der die Geschichte spielt, so eindringlich, dass ich alles genau vor Augen hatte, vor allem der Wald mit seiner Dunkelheit war sehr einprägend für mich. Auch wenn in diesem Buch gar nicht so viel passiert, hat es einen eigenen Spannungsbogen, ich musste einfach wissen, wie es weitergeht. Das Ende bleibt dann ein bisschen offen: kann Nathan mit seiner Schuld weiterleben?

Wenn man nicht von einem klassischen Thriller ausgeht, sondern sich einlässt auf ein interessantes Psychodrama, dann wird man nicht enttäuscht werden. Ich jedenfalls wurde gut unterhalten und vergebe 4 Sterne!

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### Ian Mapp says

One of the best thrillers that I have read in a long time. A genuine page turner of simple pleasures.

Starts off with Nathan - working for some crappy washed up DJ who kind of reminded me of DLT, but that may have been three recent news stories. He goes along to a party at the DJ house, meets an ex student friend (Bob) who is dicking around with a Ouija Board. In a bid to escape Nathan's girlfriend, Bob, Nathan and a 19 year old girl, escape off in a car. Things develop and the girl is loose with her affections and like all girls like this in any horror story, winds up dead.

Nathan and Bob panic and bury the girl and seemingly get away with things, with all fingers pointing at the hairy cornflake.

Life moves on but Nathan cannot shake off the guilt and tries to get close to the family of the girl, meeting her sister. They fall in love and Nathan is accepted into the family, with this dark secret hanging over him.

Then Bob turns up.... with bad news.

The book plays out very well, there are no cliches here and a genuinely surprising ending which works well. The darkness of the story also plays out well and if it was filmed, it could be made quite scary - with Bob's interest in the paranormal.

You are never too sure where the story is going and this is to its credit - its unusual in genre fiction to not know the result.

Fair play to Neil Cross. I will be reading more of his work.

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## **Karen says**

Neil Cross really knows how to put together a story. More importantly, in *BURIAL*, his second crime fiction novel, he's absolutely not afraid to write a very morally ambiguous central character.

When Nathan meets up with journalist Bob again at a drug fuelled party at his bosses house, he did something incredibly stupid. He was young and restless but just maybe he wasn't the one that killed a young girl that night. Maybe she wasn't actually killed but just died in very wrong circumstances. He certainly had a part in covering up her death. Somehow that isn't the worst thing he's ever done, not when you consider the circumstances of his marriage. But then, what pathetic little Nathan has made of his life is badly threatened when Bob returns with some devastating news about that night.

Either way, *BURIAL* takes the reader into a world that's populated by some pretty unpleasant people. Nathan's boss - the washed up radio DJ who is, well tacky. The journalist Bob, just a bit off, or maybe a whole lot worse than that. Nathan - on the one hand easily led, a loser who spends his life compensating for one night where he was too pathetic to do the right thing. And now it's almost impossible to do the right thing, and keep his life comfortable, and happy and the way he wants it to be. Maybe a job as a greeting card salesman is as close to retribution as he's ever going to get, it's hard to tell, Nathan's internal dialogue is pretty good at convincing him that there's nothing wrong with his life and he's not a loser, despite the distinct undertone that he thinks he probably really is.

The interesting thing about *BURIAL* is that the pace simply never lets up, and whilst it's just not easy to sympathise with Nathan, it's very very easy to want to know what happens to him, where he goes with his life, how is he going to make things normal or right. You also can't help but care about some of the people around Nathan - his wife, her parents.

Neil Cross is undoubtedly a very accomplished writer. You're not likely to enjoy the ride with *BURIAL*, you're probably going to end up disliking just about everybody and everything in this book. For all of that I couldn't put it down, and I simply can't forget. If you haven't read his first crime fiction novel - *NATURAL HISTORY* - then *BURIAL* is an option as they aren't part of a series (having said that no reason why you shouldn't read *NATURAL HISTORY* as well as *BURIAL*!).

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## **Erika says**

*Burial* begins like the opening suspense sequence of any number of hit TV crime shows before the theme song starts playing: a mysterious acquaintance arrives on a rainy evening at the doorstep of protagonist Nathan's English home. Nathan is frozen in fear and, according to stranger, there's something odd and twisted about the photos he has hanging in his front room.

What follows is an account of memory--flashbacks to the moment Nathan and Bob (the mysterious acquaintance) first met. College: a time for experimentation and making friends with sundry folk who may or may not come in handy in the future. Enter Bob, a PhD candidate researching, of all things, ghosts. An odd fellow, he nevertheless leaves little to no impression on Nathan until they meet again at a party hosted by Nathan's boss, a washed-out entertainer riding out the last trickles of celebrity and fame.

The only explanation I can give for what happens next is alcohol and cocaine. Lots and lots of alcohol and cocaine--and a dramatic excuse to create a cheap psychological suspense thriller. After the drinking and the snorting, Bob takes Nathan and new female friend, 19-year-old Elise Fox, into the woods for a bit of backseat fun. After mutual sex in Bob's car with Nathan (in which Bob pretends not to watch), Elise is accosted by Bob and Nathan, not as voyeuristic as Bob, exits the vehicle to relieve his bladder. Hearing what he thinks are cries of sexual ecstasy and passion, Nathan gets a little jealous, but goes about his business. What he discovers upon his return is a nightmare: Elise, post-coital, dead in Bob's lap.

Confused, wasted, and completely out of his element, Nathan helps Bob bury the body by a river and promptly tries to get on with his life. But he's haunted by his guilt. Nathan loses his job, his girlfriend, and his apartment in the whirlwind investigation that follows Elise's disappearance.

*Burial* reads like a television suspense thriller with, I'm sad to say, shallow characters and ankle-deep convictions. Think an episode of "CSI" that went on for just a bit too long. There's a couple of twists in the novel that keep it interesting, but do far from save it: Nathan, so plagued by the way he helped destroy the Fox family makes it his duty to bring happiness to Elise's parents and sister, Holly. How he accomplishes this is marrying Holly and chumming up to the folks.

We're never really given privileged access inside Nathan's thought-process enough to follow his weird logic and can only assume he draws comfort from this relationship as their happiness and ability to get on with life eases his own guilt. I would have much rather have preferred to understand why or how Nathan so easily became enamored of Holly, or, if it was only a desire to clear his conscience that prodded along the relationship.

Jacki, Holly's best friend and one of the investigators of Elise's case, was such a disappointment. Her character seemed flimsy and unrealistic. She's an investigator and yet she buys the pack of bull Nathan feeds her about the events of that fateful night. She's too easy to believe in the goodness of Nathan by proxy of Holly and lacks the intuition to root out the truth. And Jacki's promise to Holly, at the end, turns trite--she may have finally caught the real killer, but Nathan's involvement remains ludicrously a secret.

Bob, on the other hand, was by far the most interesting out of the bunch. By the end we find out his obsession with ghosts--and his long since rejected PhD proposal--blew open the doors wide to welcome any and all avenues as conduits for the discovery of irrefutable and tangible fact on the existence of ghosts. His mother died at a young age and, tender boy that he was, never dealt quite well with the event. In a gruesome revelation with an impish, wicked grin, Bob tells Nathan he killed Elise on purpose, near water, to see if he could create a haunting. Of course, the plan backfired.

Bob is more than a little messed up, and the "twist" ending wasn't a surprise--Cross was quite obvious and not-so-subtle with his narrative, mystery-making, but it was, sad to say, the better part of this novel.

The only character I found myself sympathizing with was Holly. I'm only sorry her and Nathan got on so well at the end. I kept hoping she'd discover the truth about Nathan's cover-up even though Cross set up both eventualities with crappy, soul-crushing outcomes. As Nathan trots off happily to greet his new family, I imagined a score of creepy, I-know-what-you-did music playing in the background.

This book was an easy, quick read with little satisfaction to ease my tastes. I'm sure a lot of people would be thrilled at the drama and suspense; it would probably make a good made-for-TV movie or episode of "CSI", "Cold Case", or any one of those types of detective/crime dramas, but I wouldn't watch it. It ran too long and could have either been a lot shorter or more in depth. Cross also needs to take a look at the conventions he over-uses. Hands can do more than flutter, but I guess old habits die hard.

Just because I didn't like this one, doesn't mean someone else would, too! If you're interested, I'd try

checking this out at your local library, if you can find it. I have the UK edition and unfortunately could not find the US version. The good thing is, if you want to buy *Burial*, it's already out in paperback!

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## Chad Eagleton says

When I started *Burial* after I got home from work, I thought had a made a bad choice on that night's reading selection. The opening is almost all dialogue and the prose is typical, all tough-guy crime novel terse. I sighed, thinking it was going to read like a lengthy screen treatment.

I was wrong.

After the knock on the Nathan's door, Cross takes us back to the beginning of the psychological hell and shows us the writing chops that make Luther one of the best shows on television: the prose style becomes focused and poetic, the dialogue spot-on, and the tension very real--growing not out of increasing violent confrontations or Bruckheimer showdowns, but understandable mistakes stemming from a fully-realized human being in awful circumstances. It was incredibly refreshing to read crime fiction that was character driven and about normal people, not cops and criminals or hitmen and junkies.

Cross easily stood the time test and is now one of my go-to authors. You should give him a chance, maybe while you're waiting for the third and final series of Luther.

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## Rachel says

This is not the type of book I usually pick up, and after coming across the rather odd line "Nathan looked at the receiver as if it was firm and warm and damp, like a semi-erect penis." (p. 74), I wasn't sure I'd be able to let myself like it. But I couldn't put it down... I just kept wanting to read more and more. Now that I've finished it, I have to say that for all the oddness and general creepiness of the plot, I really enjoyed the story.

One of the things that made the story so compelling was the evenness of the plot. There wasn't any significant suspense -- instead, everything seemed to flow evenly. First one thing happened, and then something else, and then something else. It was a lot more like real life that way, I think, than other suspense novels I've read. Sure, wacky things happen in life, and some of them are particularly creepy, but you wake up the next day and life just goes on.

The book's exploration of psychology is quite stunning, and rather more profound than I would have expected of such a book. Nathan, the novel's protagonist, is complicit in an unforgivable act but is nevertheless able to build a life for himself in its aftermath -- a tidy, happy life he would not likely have had if he hadn't performed the hideous act in the first place. How Nathan comes to live with himself and his happiness is interesting indeed.

Also, creepy Bob turns out to be a much deeper, far more three-dimensional character than he may originally have seemed, and his actions take on new meaning in light of what we come to learn, toward the very end, of his background. While the revelation of this back story is a little contrived, it does casue one to pause and reflect on people's hidden motives and hidden selves.

The element of the paranormal that Cross introduced was also very well written. I won't say much on this point, because I don't want to risk spoiling the plot, but Cross manages to include the paranormal in the

narrative without being preachy on the one hand or cheesy on the other. He makes no assumptions, and leaves it to the reader to decide for him/herself. This is as good writing should be.

Overall, I'm quite impressed with the story, and would look forward to reading more from this author. His prose isn't always the cleanest, but his narrative is very well crafted.

I can't get over the British spelling of "kerb." :)

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### **Esme says**

Nathan und Bob kennen sich nur flüchtig und trotzdem ist ihrer beider Leben untrennbar miteinander verbunden. Bei einer Party starb ein junges Mädchen und die Beiden vergruben gemeinsam ihre Leiche in einem Wald. Nun, zehn Jahre später, soll der Wald abgeholzt werden und einem neuen Wohngebiet Platz machen. Und die Geister der Vergangenheit stehen wieder auf. Geister im wörtlichen Sinn, denn der unheimliche Bob beschäftigt sich mit dem Erforschen von Geistererscheinungen.

Neil Cross schreibt neben Romanen auch Drehbücher für die Fernsehserien Luther und Spooks. Und dies merkt man auch seinem Psychothriller Burial (Vergraben) an, besteht er doch überwiegend aus Dialogen. Nach dem ersten Kapitel, der erneuten Begegnung Nathans und Bobs, folgt eine Rückblende über ihr Kennenlernen, die fürchterliche Party und wie das Leben danach weitergeht aus Nathans Sicht. Die Schuld und Verdrängung sind sehr beklemmend dargestellt. Gegen Ende nimmt das Buch jedoch eine Wendung, die zwar durchaus stimmig aufgrund der Charakterentwicklung ist, aber auch auf zu vielen Zufällen basiert. Und zum Schluss kann ich nur in der britischen Redewendung sagen: Das ist nicht fair!

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### **Lou Robinson says**

As with all the Neil Cross I've read so far, I couldn't put this book down. A punchy story, distasteful main characters and plenty of suspense. Great stuff.

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### **Gatorman says**

I'm not quite sure how I feel about this book. I liked it, for the most part, but there's just something missing from it that keeps it from getting any more than 3 stars. It's well-written and it kept me interested in how the story would end. Plus, there is a revelation towards the end from one of the characters about what happened with the dead girl Elise that I found rather unique. However, other than that, there isn't a whole lot original about the plot and the actions of the protagonist, Nathan, in the second half of the book in trying to hide the truth didn't really make sense and left me frustrated with the direction Cross went with him. Plus, I just didn't buy the ending and it left me feeling unsatisfied. It's good but it could have, and should have, been much better. Not in the same class as Cross's Luther book.

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### **Karen San Diego says**

**Burial** by Neil Cross is a perfect example of a wayward crime novel. This surpasses all cliches and expected events and characters and conclusions. This is a work of a courageous author who hopes to break barriers about this genre. It's not one you'll instantly like, I cannot guarantee that; but it's one which instantly takes your interest. It's a very dark and depressing novel that surpasses several known moral codes.

It's great!

Synopsis:

Nathan is at the end of his rope. His career is falling apart and his relationship with his girlfriend is running cold he's certain she would break up with him anytime now. He attends a party organized by his boss and things take an interesting turn when he meets Bob, a paranormal investigator he met several years back. Certain that things can't be worse anymore, he makes out with a girl he met at the party, Elise, and takes her to the woods with Bob on their tail. Drugs and booze together, things go wrong and Elise dies. They bury her body in a panic, and go back to the party, agreeing that they'll never talk about it again. Years later, Nathan's life is finally in order when Bob knocks on his door bearing terrible news. Has the past they thought they buried finally caught up with them?

Again, it's not your everyday thriller; it's rather darker and more disturbing than most. Neil Cross was able to create the excellent environment for this novel; the tone was, well, creepy even from the start, like you know something bad was going to happen halfway through. The bold use of profanity even helped define the setting of the story. Alongside the choice of words was the vivid descriptions. The use of graphic words painted the whole picture for the readers that it almost felt as if I was reading a graphic novel.

The setting helped in extracting the emotions from the readers. As dark as the setting was, it extracted a complimenting emotion/reaction from the reader. What also helped is the good character development. Here, it was not the past tragedies (death of loved ones, traumatic experiences from childhood, etc) that defined the characters; they were defined by the present itself and by the actions they chose to undertake given the choices and situations they were currently in.

The psychology of the main characters were also explored in depth. Not only will the reader be able to understand the behavior and decisions of the character but also get to sympathize with them due to these explanations. Even when the character was being stupid or being evil, you will understand the motivation behind their action thus creating a stronger development.

Not least of all is the excellent plot of the story. Good setting, check. Well-defined characters, check. Emotions, check. Psychology, check. Now, it wouldn't have been a great read all in all if it wasn't for the plot. A man on the brink of destruction goes to a party, meets a girl, meets an odd person from the past, and the three of them go for a ride to the woods to engage in sexual activity. Only two walk out alive with dark secrets. It gets even more interesting, the kind of interesting that will make you squirm on your seat just to see what would happen next -- is when (view spoiler) And what made up for all the built up excitement throughout is the masterful ending. Gripping and suspenseful, that after reading it will leave you thinking about several what-ifs and could've-beens.

A thoroughly disturbing story of a man whose life is put at the mercy of a secret he thought he had buried but at last caught up with him, in the worst possible time.

It's a great read for crime lovers who are looking for a different taste in the genre. I personally recommend it, but it's not for weak hearts!

## Mareike says

Vergraben ist ein Buch, auf das ich zum einen wegen dem Cover aufmerksam wurde. Ich finde, das Cover sehr eindringlich und mir war sofort klar, dass ich dieses Buch einfach lesen möchte. Zum anderen wurde der Thriller von Neil Cross geschrieben, der ebenfalls der Verfasser von Luther. Die Drohung ist. Das Buch habe ich zwar noch nicht gelesen, es wurde mir aber schon empfohlen, so dass ich auch neugierig auf den Autor war. Gleich vorne weg möchte ich sagen, dass ich nach der Lektüre beschlossen habe, weitere Bücher von Neil Cross zu lesen. Ich bin sehr gespannt, ob er seinen Stil auch im oben genannten und dem kommenden Buch (Gefangen) beibehält.

Anhand des Klappentextes hatte ich erwartet, dass die Geschichte an der Stelle einsetzt, an der Bob wieder vor Nathans Tür steht (siehe Klappentext) und hier eine spannende Situation entsteht. Insgesamt war das durchaus der Fall, aber knapp 2/3 des Buches handelten von Nathans Lebensweg, der zu dieser Situation führt. Man begleitet Nathan in einer langen Rückblende, in der berichtet wird, wie er Bob kennen lernte, was auf der Party geschehen und wie es Nathan danach ergangen ist. Das Buch war also völlig anders als erwartet, aber dennoch wirklich gut. Es war schnell klar, dass ich keine rasante Handlung erwarten durfte, aber Spannung kam meiner Meinung nach dennoch auf. Gefesselt war ich dann vor allem wegen den interessanten Charakteren und wie sie mit ihrer Schuld oder der Ungewissheit leben konnten.

Besonders gelungen finde ich die Auswirkung des Todes der jungen Frau auf den Protagonisten. Man kann sehr gut verfolgen, wie Nathan (nicht) mit der Situation zurecht kommt. Es gibt viele Einblicke in sein Seelenleben und mir kam mehr als einmal der Gedanke, ob er sich selbst bestrafen möchte. Ab und an stellte ich mir auch die Frage, wie ich in seiner Situation reagieren würde. Vergraben wird aus Nathans Sicht geschildert und ist daher natürlich von seinem Schuldgefühl eingefärbt. Das macht die Lektüre zu einer interessanten Einsicht in menschliche Abgründe, die ich bei dem Buch gar nicht erwartet hätte. Nathan ist auch nicht der typische Held, den man so häufig in Thrillern findet. Er hat Ecken und Kanten, was ihn mir deutlich näher brachte, da er einfach greifbarer war.

Auch die anderen Charaktere - Bob, Elise, Holly - waren interessant gestaltet. Man muss sich bei dem Buch darauf einlassen, dass der Fokus nicht auf rasante Handlungen ausgelegt ist, sondern eben "echte" Charaktere gezeigt werden, die mit dem plötzlichen Verlust zurecht kommen müssen. Das gestaltet sich oftmals schwierig und wurde wirklich gut vom Autor aufgezeigt.

Nachdem ich Vergraben zugeklappt hatte, musste ich einen Moment inne halten und überlegen, was ich gerade gelesen habe. Ist es ein Thriller oder doch eher ein Krimi oder vielleicht gar ein Drama? Ich denke, man findet aus allen drei Genres etwas in diesem Buch. Ich habe erst nach der Lektüre erfahren, dass der Autor auch Drehbücher (z.B. das der Serie Luther) schreibt. Das merkt man der Geschichte auch an, da sehr viele Dialoge geführt werden und der Großteil der Geschichte als Rückblende erzählt wird. Mir hat dieser Stil allerdings gut gefallen, da er das Buch spannender und dynamischer machte. Ich würde es als Psychothriller bezeichnen.

### Bewertung

Vergraben ist ein außergewöhnlicher Thriller, der von seinen Dialogen und dem Blick in die menschlichen Abgründe lebt. Der Fokus liegt klar auf den ausgereiften Charakteren und ihrem Leben nach dem Tod der jungen Frau. Rasante Action sollte man also nicht erwarten. Vergraben war daher ganz anders, als ich es erwartet hätte und konnte mich dennoch überzeugen.

## Sharon says

Secrets are just that, only when you know they are about to be revealed, you will do all you can to stop them from destroying you and those close to you. Nathan knows exactly how this feels as he made a mistake years ago and kept it hidden, but Nathan's world is about to be turned upside down and there isn't a thing he can do to stop it.

Burial by Neil Cross was an enjoyable read, but It wasn't as good as I imagined it was going to be. Yes, it had the mystery and suspense, but I simply felt it was missing something and I'm not quite sure what it was. In saying that I still think it is well worth reading.

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## comfort says

This story was so thrilling I actually felt my heart speed up at times, which is unusual for me.

It starts in the present day when two men meet up and discuss a "situation" that had occurred 10 years previously which entailed them burying the body of a young girl.

It then jumps to that time and the story starts to unfold.

Nathan (our "hero") is in a job he hates, living with a girl he is about to dump, when he is invited to a party at his bosses' house and takes the girlfriend as a way of easing her out of the relationship.

When they arrive at the party he almost immediately deserts her, to mingle, leaving her to fend for herself. It is while he is roaming around the house he happens upon John. Nathan and John decide to go into a room to get high and then start to indulge in playing with a home made Ouija board.

It upsets Nathan as he is a non-believer and John appears to be an expert and a bit crazy to boot.

A bit later Nathan meets up with Elise and together with John they drive away from the party to have sex and drugs (as it turns out). It is while they are in John's car that something strange happens and Elise is killed. John and Nathan panic, as you would, but decide it is best to bury her in the woods and never contact each other again. That is until John comes to Nathan's house 10 years later to tell him that property developers are going to dig up the woods and they must move the body.

We learn that John is now pretty much down and out and even more crazier than 10 years ago. That Nathan has got a sensible (boring) job a wife and a lovely house- but he is afraid of the dark. It is also very interesting to know who Nathan's wife is.

My only reservation about giving this 5 stars is that at times Nathan's actions seem to be at odds with the situation. It is as if he didn't think ahead to consider the consequences of some of his actions and that he could have saved himself a lot of angst if on occasions he told the truth before the omission escalated out of control.

A gripping read from beginning to end. The narrator, Paul Thornley, is exceptional

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## Raina Joseph says

My first time at his place, I walked around the room trying to feel a little more at home. I glance through the endearing family photos and souvenirs, bearing stories I looked forward to learning but was not a part of. My eyes settled on a tall bookshelf, and my heart beat a little faster in anticipation. It was packed to the brim with books! His dad was an avid crime fiction reader. I remembered that then, staring at the countless crime fiction novels loosely organised on the shelves. A dozen romance and historical fiction novels stood out, presumably part of his mother's collection. I perused through the some of the titles, my fingers running along the spines tenderly.

I selected this novel, for no particular reason. I hadn't read much crime fiction up till then, and was looking forward to getting a taste. And what a sweet bloody disturbing taste it was.

I found the plot suspenseful and interesting. I thoroughly enjoyed the focus on the psychology of the protagonist, Nathan, as he struggles to deal with a situation which leads to the death of a young woman named Elise. I liked this book's creepy twists and turns and thought the ending was more than satisfactory. I will certainly be reading more of Cross' work, and am grateful to have read it (partly because it will serve as a nice conversation starter with his father).

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## George Kelly says

Burial is a crime-thriller-cum-horror written by the man behind the hit TV series, Luther.

The story kicks off when Nathan, an employee of a famous radio DJ, attends his boss's house party. From there, everything goes wrong. First he argues with his girlfriend in front of everyone, making a fool of himself. Then, drunkenly, he swings for his boss. And finally, he meets a girl and decides to drive out to a forest with her (alongside another guy he met at the party: Bob) and have sex with her. Bob also has sex with her, and during this twisted backyard swap-session, the girl dies. The two men bury her and conspire to cover up her death. To be on the safe side, they cut all ties and part ways.

Nathan gradually gets his life back on track, and in a misguided attempt to assuage his guilt, he hunts down the sister of the deceased. To complicate things further, he falls in love with her. Then, ten years down the line, with that horrible night far back in his rearview mirror, and everything falling into place for the first time in forever, Bob turns up at his house and tells him they need to dig up the dead girl.

The story speeds towards its conclusion from there.

It's a gripping premise, one that draws the reader in instantly, and the story, for the most part, delivers on it. As a whole, the book's quick-moving, atmospheric, and realistic, with one major set piece (the death of the girl) and everything else just a long, winding, emotional aftermath. The finale is a little too neat and easy, but the novel is still worth reading for the journey to get there. The book almost feels like a novella in some respects; something that was stretched into a novel. But if that's so, Neil Cross stretches it with skill.

It's not a story that will linger in the memory for years to come, but it *will* help pass a boring weekend.

Check it out.

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