



Dead Silent

Mark Roberts

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HIS LIFE WAS DEVOTED TO ART.
HIS DEATH WAS A MASTERPIECE.

Leonard Lawson was a respected professor of medieval art. He lived a quiet life in a suburb of Liverpool with his grown-up daughter. As far as anyone knew, he had no enemies.

Louise Lawson watched her father die. Before she blacked out, she saw his body mutilated and deformed, twisted into a hellish parody of the artworks he loved.

Investigating a killer bringing medieval horror to Merseyside, DCI Eve Clay must overcome her own demons to unpick the dark symbolism of the crime scene. A fifty-year silence has been broken – with a message written in blood...

Dead Silent Details

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From Reader Review Dead Silent for online ebook

Anne says

Fesselnde Spannung garantiert

"Totenengel" ist wirklich ein temporeicher, spannender und unglaublich fesselnder Thriller, den man nur schwer aus der Hand legen kann! Während der Prolog im Vergleich zum Rest des Buches eher "harmlos" wirkt, aber nichtsdestotrotz geheimnisvoll ist und die Neugier schürt, zieht der Rest der Story den Leser in eine rasante Jagd voller Wendungen und Überraschungen nach dem Tätern des schrecklichen Mordes. Die Verbindungen zu religiösen Bildern und Schriften wirken dabei in keiner Weise übermäßig, wird aber immer in dem Maße und von einer Seite mit in die Handlung eingebracht, dass zum Ende hin die gesamte Geschichte immer interessanter wird und der Spannungsbogen immer weiter zunimmt. Der Schreibstil ist sehr fließend und die kurzen Kapitel sind sehr spannend geschrieben, so dass man nahezu durch die Seiten fliegt.

Die Protagonisten sind alle sehr gut ausgearbeitet, Eve war mir von Anfang an sympathisch. Ihr Team ist auch echt klasse, wobei man bei so vielen Kollegen in ihrem Team manchmal ein wenig den Überblick verliert, aber schnell wieder dem roten Faden folgen kann.

Ich habe diesen, also den zweiten Teil der Reihe gelesen, ohne den ersten Teil zu kennen, was aber gar nicht schlimm ist. Man hat nicht das Gefühl etwas verpasst zu haben, aber ich bin trotzdem neugierig geworden und würde den ersten Teil nachträglich wohl noch lesen wollen.

Anne Hill says

Not an easy read

Not an easy read, dark and disturbing but worth it. Man, the only animal that can inflict so much pain for no other reason than he can, not for survival, just because. There is goodness here as well and hope. Free will, a curse and a blessing.

Gordon Johnston says

A decent thriller, but perhaps a little less entertaining than the first instalment in the Eve Clay series.

The brutal murder of a former professor carried out with a religious theme. Links to several works of art. And more brutality to follow. Clay and her team have to solve a number of puzzles linked to an ancient experiment.

Much of the plot is predictable and, without spoilers, easy for the reader to work out. There is one excellent twist that comes close to redeeming things though ...

DCI Eve Clay is a complex character and I felt I didn't learn too much about her in this novel. But I do think there is a lot more to be revealed and I'll be reading the next in the series in the hope of finding it.

Sabrina says

Eine ältere Frau erleidet mitten auf der Straße einen epileptischen Anfall. Wer ist sie? Woher kommt sie? Als die Ermittler dies herausfinden wird die Angelegenheit brisant, denn der Vater dieser Frau fiel einem brutalen Mörder zum Opfer. Ermittlerin Eve Clay übernimmt den Fall mit der pervers zugerichteten Leiche samt bizarrer Inszenierung. Warum musste der alte Mann so sterben? Wer steckt hinter der Tat?

Die Geschichte hält sich nicht mit langen Vorreden auf, sondern startet direkt, brutal und wirklich heftig. Die Beschreibungen der Inszenierung allein waren schon nicht ohne, aber was danach kommen sollte, trotzdem in Großteilen nicht absehbar. Doch zunächst mal der für mich größte Kritikpunkt: Etwas unrealistisch fand ich, dass die Ermittlungen nur wenige Stunden in Anspruch nahmen. Natürlich sind viele Ermittler beschäftigt (deren Namen mich zumindest in der ersten Hälfte des Buches immer wieder stutzen ließen, nach dem Motto: wer war das jetzt nochmal?), aber so einen komplexen Fall löst niemand mal eben so in weniger als 24 Stunden. Schon gar nicht, wenn die Taten so abscheulich sind, die Motivlage zu Beginn so unklar und offen. Auf mich wirkte das einfach nicht ganz authentisch, jedoch wird es durch den rasanten Stil, samt kurzen Kapiteln auch fast nie langweilig. Hat, wie so vieles, seine Vor- und Nachteile und ist letztlich eine Frage des Geschmacks. Trotzdem fand ich den Schreibstil insgesamt sehr überzeugend. Er beschränkt sich auf das wirklich wichtige und lässt das Privatleben der Ermittler weitgehend außen vor. Mir gefiel die Ermittlerin Eve Clay ausgesprochen gut, die als einzige etwas mehr Platz als Person in Anspruch nimmt. Endlich mal wieder eine Ermittlerin, die weder ein Sucht- noch ein Familienproblem hat. Das war mal eine willkommene Abwechslung! Ansonsten sind die ins Geschehen involvierten Personen auch spannend beschrieben und man entwickelt gewisse Zu- und Abneigungen, ist sich aber nie ganz sicher, ob der Autor den Leser nicht gerade aufs Glatteis führt.

Motiv und Auflösung fand ich gelungen, besonders der Showdown zum Ende der Geschichte hatte mich nochmal richtig gepackt. Doch auch vorher fand ich es schon spannend und interessant, abgesehen von einem kleinen Hänger in der Mitte des Buches. Eine Überraschung am Ende, die ich so nicht unbedingt erwartet hatte, aber in sich schlüssig war und noch ein wenig Nachdenkpotential barg, hat mich auch überzeugt. Leider darf ich nicht zu viel verraten, aber bei aller Kritik kann ich das Buch wirklich empfehlen, zumindest wenn man sich auch für ein wenig Religion und Kunst in Thrillern begeistern kann. Die Morde waren sehr brutal, bizarr (gilt auch für das Motiv) und auch entsprechend beschrieben, daher würde ich eher Zartbesaiteten eher von dem Buch abraten.

Ich hatte den ersten Teil der Reihe - Totenprediger - nicht gelesen, aber keinerlei Verständnisprobleme gehabt. Nach dieser Lektüre, werde ich aber den ersten Teil noch nachholen, allein schon, weil mich die Ermittlerin Clay wirklich überzeugt hat und ganz offensichtlich eine interessante Person ist.

Chris Nolan says

I love this series! The first instalment, Blood Mist, was very good but this is even better! In the first book we learnt a lot about Eve herself and her upbringing, which impacted on the crime she was solving. In Dead Silent, Mark Roberts presents us with a fascinating scenario in which an elderly university professor is murdered in a gruesome and ritualistic way. The story is extremely clever, focusing as it does on several works of art which relate to the crimes. Roberts shows himself to be a clever and erudite writer as well as an excellent portrayer of the wonderful city of Liverpool.

justbooks says

Totenengel ist der zweite Thriller von Mark Roberts in dem Eve Clay ermittelt. Nichtsdestotrotz, dass ich den ersten Teil nicht gelesen habe, wollte ich gerne den zweite Teil lesen. Die Angst, dass ich nicht gut hineinkomme war gänzlich unbegründet, da der Fall unabhängig vom ersten Teil war und auch sonst war der Einstieg gut, da man die Protagonistin durch einen Einblick in ihre Vergangenheit gut kennen gelernt hat. An diesem Thriller hat mir sehr vieles gefallen und sehr wenig nicht gefallen. Gefallen hat mir, dass man gemerkt hat, dass der Autor sich bei der Geschichte etwas gedacht hat und sich wirklich Mühe gegeben hat, was man daran sieht, dass die Charaktere gut durchdacht sind und jeder auf seine Weise höchst interessant war, alles sehr detailreich (aber nie langweilig) beschrieben wurde und die Verknüpfungen schlüssig und interessant, aber dennoch nicht schnell zu durchschauen waren. Auch die verschiedenen Perspektiven, durch die man die Charaktere gut kennen lernt und einen guten Einblick in die Handlung bekommt und die kurzen Kapitel die die Spannung sehr erhöhen, da dazwischen oft ein Perspektivenwechsel stattgefunden hat, haben mir sehr gefallen und durch immer neue Spuren und Entdeckungen konnte der Spannungsbogen bis zur letzten Seite gehalten werden. Und was die Protagonistin angeht. Endlich mal niemand der mit seinem Beruf hadert und wegen seines Jobs eine völlig kaputte Familie hat und sich in irgendetwas flüchtet. Eve Clay hat mir als Kommissarin wirklich sehr gut gefallen, so wie die anderen natürlich auch. Auch liest sich die ganze Geschichte schön flüssig, sodass man sie gut in einem Rutsch lesen könnte, wenn man etwas Zeit mitbringt. Totenengel ist ein spannender Thriller mit perfiden Morden, Perversionen und einem schrecklichen "Psychospiel" verpackt in einer unglaublich guten Geschichte, welcher nichts für zarte Gemüter ist, spannend bis zum Schluss bleibt und mir aufregende Lesestunden beschehrt hat.

Just_me says

Having read book one - Blood Mist, I was really happy to receive book two of detective Eve Clays adventures. I wasn't disappointed and was instantly gripped - small problem being is that it has been 1/2 term and the kids have been home so I haven't been able to digest it in a sitting or two.

I can't rate it as highly as book one as I actually found Dead Silent quite predicatable. I can't hint why without spoilers but you learn quite early on that there is more to some characters than others. I love that this book is set within a 24 hour period - although I think this might be unrealistic - it pushes the story forwards constantly and maintains a brilliant pace.

There are a few characters that I would like to know more about and I suspect that with Eve over time we will be enlightened. I will defiantly be up for reading for future books and will be defiantly be looking out for Mark Riberts in the future.

Thanks to goodreads firstreads and the publisher for sending me a complimentary copy to read and review.

Paul Finch says

WARNING FOR MINOR SPOILERS ...

Liverpool in the depths of December. Christmas is approaching, but there is little joy to be had in the Sefton Park district of the wintry city.

DCI Eve Clay and her team of experienced homicide investigators are baffled and horrified when they are called to the murder of retired octogenarian college professor, Leonard Lawson, an expert in medieval art. To make the case even more disturbing, Lawson, who was ritually slaughtered inside his own home and then

fastened to a stake in the fashion of a game-animal, was discovered by his daughter, Louise, an ageing and rather fragile lady herself, who is so shocked by the incident that she can barely even discuss it.

This resolute silence, whether it's a natural reaction to the horror of the incident, or something more sinister – and Clay is undecided either way – impedes the police, who are keen to delve into the victim's past, not to mention his current circle of acquaintances, to try and work out who might harbour such a grudge that they would inflict such sadistic violence on him.

At least Clay can call upon a considerable amount of expertise. DS Bill Hendricks is her strong right-arm, and a no-nonsense but deep-thinking copper who knows his job inside out. DS Gina Riley is the softer face of the job, another experienced detective but a gentle soul when she wants to be, and very intuitive. Meanwhile, DS's Karl Stone and Terry Mason are each formidable in their own way, as are the various other support staff the charismatic DCI can call upon.

With such power and knowledge in her corner, it isn't long before Clay is making progress, a matter of hours in fact, though the mystery steadily deepens, leading her first to a care home for mentally disabled men (including the likeable, innocent Abey), and yet run by the non-too-pleasant Adam Miller and his attractive if weary wife, Danielle (who may or may not be more than just a colleague to the young, modern-minded carer, Gideon Stephens).

Yes, it seems as if there are mysteries within mysteries to be uncovered during this investigation. However, Clay and her crew continue to make ground, finally becoming interested in Gabriel Huddersfield, a disturbed loner who haunts the park and makes strange and even menacing religious speeches, and being drawn irresistibly towards three curious if time-honoured paintings: *The Last Judgement* by Hieronymous Bosch, and *The Tower of Babel* and *The Triumph of Death* by Pieter Bruegel.

These garish Renaissance masterpieces were all regarded at the time, and by modern scholars, as instructions for the benefit of mankind, giving warnings about his fate should he stray from the path of righteousness, each one incorporating terrifying and brutal imagery in order to deliver its fearsome message.

But even though these objects inform the case, and Clay and her team soon develop suspects, the enquiry continues to widen. What role, for example, does the rather strange character who was the late Professor Noone have to play in all this, and what exactly was the so-called 'English Experiment'? All we know about it initially is that it wasn't very ethical and that it somehow involved children.

Clay herself becomes emotionally attached to the case, its quasi-religious undertones affecting her more and more, because, as a childhood orphan, she was raised by Catholic nuns, though in her case – and this makes a welcome change in a work of modern fiction – it wasn't all negative; Clay owes her empathetic nature to the love and affection she received from her guardian, Sister Philomena, while the tough but kindly Father Murphy recognised and nurtured the spark of leonine determination that would go on to gird her greatly for the challenging paths ahead.

But all this will be rendered null and void of course if the Selfton Park murderer is not apprehended quickly. Because, almost inevitably, he now strikes again, committing two more equally horrific ritualistic slayings.

Clay and her team find themselves racing against time to end this ghastliness, a race that takes them into and around some very notable Liverpool landmarks, the city's two great cathedrals for example, and all along the snowy, slushy banks of the Mersey (all of which are generously mapped out for us). And all the while, they become ever more aware that this is no ordinary level of depravity they are dealing with. Nor is it necessarily the work of a single killer. Who, for example, is 'the First Born', and who is the 'Angel of Destruction'? Whoever these enemies of society actually are, however many they number, and whatever their crazed, fervour-driven motives, it soon becomes apparent that they are just as likely to be a threat to the police

hunting them as they were to those victims they have already butchered ...

Dead Silent is the second Eve Clay novel from Mark Roberts, and a pretty intriguing follow-up to the original outing, Blood Mist.

From the outset, the chilly urban setting is excellently realised. You totally get the feeling that you're in a wintry Liverpool, the bitter cold all but emanating from its pages, the age-old monolithic structures of the city's great cathedrals standing stark and timeless against this dreary backdrop, the gloomy greyness of which is more than matched by the mood; the murder detectives certainly have no time for the impending fun of Christmas as they work doggedly through what is basically a single high-intensity shift, pursuing a pair of truly malign and murderous opponents.

And that's another vital point to make. Dead Silent is another of those oft-quoted 'page-turners', but in this case it's the real deal – because it practically takes place in real time.

The enquiry commences at 2.38am on a freezing December morning, and finishes at 8.04pm that night, the chapters, each one of which opens helpfully with a time-clock, often arriving within a few minutes of each other. This is a clever device, which really does keep you reading, especially as almost every new chapter brings another key development in the multi-stranded tale.

If this sounds as though Dead Silent is exclusively about the enquiry, and skimps on any additional drama or character development, then that would be incorrect. It is about the enquiry – this is a murder investigation, commencing with a report that an apparently injured party is walking the streets in a daze, and finishing with a major result for the local murder team (and a twist in the tale from Hell, a shocker of an ending that literally hits you like a hammer-blow!), with very few events occurring in between that aren't connected to it. However, the rapid unfolding of this bewildering mystery, and the warm but intensely professional interplay between the various detectives keeps everything rattling along.

Because this is a highly experienced and very well-oiled investigation unit, each member slotting comfortably and proficiently into his or her place, attacking the case on several fronts at once, and yet at the same time operating as a super-efficient whole, of which DCI Eve Clay is the central hub.

Of course, this kind of arrangement is replicated in big city police departments across the world, and is usually the reason why mystifying murders are reported on the lunchtime news, only for the arrest of a suspect to be announced by teatime. As an ex-copper, it gave me a real pang of pleasure to see one of the main offenders here, a cruel narcissist and Pound Shop megalomaniac, expressing dismay and disbelief when he learns how quickly he is being closed down.

And yet, Mark Roberts doesn't just rush us through the case. He also gives himself lots of time to do some great character work.

As previously stated, Eve Clay is the keystone, the intellectual and organisational force behind the team's progress, but at the same time, while a mother back at home, also a mother to her troops, someone they can confide in when they have problems, but also someone they have implicit faith will lead them from one success to the next. What is really fascinating about Clay, though, is the way her difficult childhood in a Catholic orphanage has strengthened her emotionally and gifted her with a warmth the likes of which I've rarely seen in fictional detectives (and which, at times, is genuinely touching). She makes a fine if unusual hero.

To avoid giving away too many spoilers, I must, by necessity, avoid discussing the civilian characters in the book, except to say that Mark Roberts takes a cynical but perceptive view of the kind of people police officers meet when investigating serious crime.

Ultimately, all those involved in this case, even if only on the periphery, are abnormal in one way or another, while those at the heart of it ... well, suffice to say that some kind of insanity is at work here. Because surely only insanity, or pure evil, or a combination of both, can lie at the root of murders like these. Roberts investigates this wickedness to a full and satisfying degree, completely explaining – if not excusing – the terrible acts that are depicted, and yet at the same time using them to underscore the dour tone of the book. Because there is nothing particularly extravagant or outlandish about the villains in *Dead Silent*, even if they do commit horrific and sadistic murders. They may be depraved, but there is still an air of the kitchen sink about them, of the mundane, of the self-absorbed losers that so many violent sexual criminals are in real life – again, this adds a welcome flavour of the authentic.

To finish on a personal note, I also loved the arcane, artistic elements in the tale. Again, I won't go into this in too much detail, but I've long been awe-stricken by messianic later-medieval painters like Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Bruegel. Though replete with multiple meanings, their lurid visions of Hell and damnation, of a world gone mad (or maybe a world born mad!), are among the most memorable and disturbing ever committed to canvas. It's distressing to consider that such horror derived from men of artistry and intellect, but then to see these ancient atrocities interwoven with latter-day insanities like the English Experiment (which again has emerged from men with talent and education!), is fascinating, and gives this novel a richness of aura and depth of atmosphere that I've rarely encountered in crime fiction.

Read *Dead Silent*. It's a class act.

Rach says

??

Jacey says

I find this book incredibly difficult to read and follow due to the author's writing style and the religious theme. I'm not sure if the readers are supposed to read the books in order but there seems to be zero character development for all the characters. I didn't care for any of those characters at all. Speaking of characters, there're so many police officers in the book that it took me a while to figure out who's who. Every single one of them one dimensional. You don't even have to bother remembering who's doing what at which location because there's really no difference and it doesn't have any impact on the story.

And it seems so implausible that all the events in the story could happen within 20 hours. Almost every conversation between Eve and her colleagues were done over the phone yet they could solve the crime in such a short period of time.

I also noticed the author has the penchant of overusing the exclamation mark unnecessarily. At one point it felt like I was reading a play by Shakespeare or something.

Originally wanted to give it one star but adding one more for the twist at the end. I probably won't be continuing with this series.

Breakaway Reviewers says

Murders most foul.

DCI Eve Clay and her team find Professor Leonard Lawson murdered and his body posed to replicate a scene associated with a painting by Pieter Bruegel. They quickly realise that this is the work of two very twisted and disturbed individuals. But it's not long before the team start asking questions; what could the Professor have done to cause someone to subject him to such a despicable and warped murder? And will they be able to crack the case before more depraved murders take place?

This is the second book in the DCI Eve Clay series. Once again Mark Roberts has excelled in writing a very dark, twisted plot that introduces you, the reader, to some very depraved individuals.

DCI Eve Clay is possibly one of the nicest detectives we meet when reading British police crime novels. She has a loving husband and a young son on whom she dotes. Each member of her team is as dedicated and hard working as she is. They all complement each other in how they go about their individual tasks of solving the crime.

Another thing that makes Eve Clay shine as a detective is her upbringing. She was in a Catholic Children's home, but her spirit and spunk were present from a very early age and she's an example of how some can pass through this type of upbringing and still go on to achieve their dreams. This is another area where Mark Roberts has done what few other authors do; he's created a team with a leader who portray what I'm sure the majority of our police force do; decent, normal people dedicated to doing their jobs.

Mark Roberts doesn't spare us the horrors of the depraved murders, nor from those who through their actions caused irreversible damage on others, but somehow, as graphic as the murders are, the story wouldn't be the same without sharing the gory details. Once again, this very talented author has given us readers something that is intelligent, complicated and a plot that is like nothing you'll find in any other book.

Treebeard

Breakaway Reviewers received a copy of the book to review.

Katrin says

Das Buch heisst doch schon "Dead Silence" und die machen trotzdem "Totenengel" draus....

Sebastian says

Während der erste Band der Eve-Clay-Reihe mich noch mit seiner schockierenden Story, der spannenden weiblichen Ermittlerfigur und der verstörenden, wenn auch manchmal etwas zu theatralischen Inszenierung überzeugen konnte, hinterlässt die Fortsetzung irgendwie einen faden Beigeschmack.

Die Story ist dabei eigentlich okay, reicht aber bei weitem nicht an die packende Handlung des Vorgängers heran und verläuft bis auf die überraschende Schlusspointe relativ wendungsarm und vorhersehbar.

Während Eve Clay in "Totenprediger" noch eine wichtige Rolle einnahm und ihrer eigenen Geschichte eine große Bedeutung zukam, ist sie hier fast nur noch eine von vielen und wird kaum als Hauptfigur wahrgenommen.

War die unheimliche Symbolik noch eine der Stärken des ersten Buches, so wirkt Roberts' Stil hier leider nur noch irgendwie befremdlich, was nicht ganz leicht in Worte zu fassen ist. Man könnte vielleicht meinen, dass einige ungelenke Formulierungen auf eine schwache Übersetzung zu schieben wären, allerdings verhalten sich die Charaktere teilweise auch sehr seltsam und sagen merkwürdige Dinge, was wohl auch im Original nicht viel natürlicher klingt. So hat man zuweilen das Gefühl, es nicht mit richtigen Menschen zu tun zu haben, was sich beim Lesen wirklich seltsam anfühlt.

Insgesamt ist "Totenengel" zwar noch ein passabler Thriller, fällt aber gegenüber dem ersten Band deutlich ab.

Karen says

Professor of medieval art, Leonard Lawson, has been mutilated and murdered, the attack witnessed by his traumatized daughter, Louise. To add to the horror, DCI Eve Clay must try to discover the significance of his body being arranged into a parody of the art work he has spent his life studying. Despite the professor having no known enemies, Clay knows that this attack was personal and is desperate to find the culprit before they find another victim to exact revenge upon.

I was first introduced to the books of Mark Roberts earlier this year after looking for reads set in my home city and thoroughly enjoyed the first book in the Eve Clay series, Blood Mist. Having fully intended to read the series in order, I was given the opportunity to participate in the blog tour for the superb Day of the Dead, meaning that I have actually read the books out of sequence, Dead Silent being the second of the three. This was not a problem, however, as it not completely essential to have read them in order.

If you have read any of the Eve Clay books, you will already know that there is a touch of the macabre about them and this is indeed evident in Dead Silent. The descriptions of the crime scenes were particularly graphic and not for the faint-hearted. It is easy to imagine these novels on the small screen and some of the scenes in this book were reminiscent of the BBC series, Messiah, starring Ken Stott.

In Eve Clay, we have a very likeable, if troubled protagonist. In Dead Silent, we get to find out a bit more about her childhood in the children's home, helping to explain why she is so dedicated to her job yet neurotic about the safety of her family. It is also good to see a police department where everyone seems to get on well and is just as devoted to solving the case as Clay.

What I enjoyed most about this book is that Mark Roberts drip-feeds you information throughout, allowing you time to try to fathom out what is taking place. Just when you think you have it all worked out, though, he throws a complete curve-ball and makes you reconsider everything you thought. This made Dead Silent a genuinely enjoyable read, and one which makes you think about how important and formative the early lives of children are.

A fantastic read and I can't wait for the next installment!

Jo says

An aged professor is found brutally tortured and murdered, his daughter a possible witness. DCI Clay and her team of Liverpool coppers investigate a case connected with a historic crime. Brilliant with lots of twists to keep you on the edge of your seat.
