



The Dog Walker

Lesley Thomson

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Brand new from the #1 bestselling author of *The Detective's Daughter*.

Stella and Jack must reawaken the secrets of the past in order to solve the mysteries of the present.

January, 1987. In the depths of winter, only joggers and dog walkers brave the Thames towpath after dark. Helen Honeysett, a young newlywed, sets off for an evening run from her riverside cottage and disappears.

Twenty-nine years later, Helen's body has never been found. Her husband has asked Stella Darnell, a private detective, and her side-kick Jack Harmon, to find out what happened all those years ago. But when the five households on that desolate stretch of towpath refuse to give up their secrets, Stella and Jack find themselves hunting a killer whose trail has long gone cold.

The Dog Walker Details

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From Reader Review The Dog Walker for online ebook

S.J. Higbee says

I thoroughly enjoyed this one. Thomson's atmospheric writing this time around has taken us to another obscure corner of London – she seems to specialise in those – where a crime was committed that shatters one family and blights the lives of others, including the husband of the victim. With two timelines running – one set around the time of the murder and afterwards as the consequences begin to stack up, while the other one is set here and now centred on the investigative efforts of Stella and Jack.

While there is not much in the way of gore in Thomson's work, that doesn't mean it is a particularly cosy read. Murder is not treated as an interesting puzzle here, but an act that has cut short a life and shattered the lives of others caught up in the investigation. Thomson writes particularly well from the pov of children who are involved, trying to make sense of what they see and hear. The sense of damage caused is reinforced by Jack's own experiences as a child, which means he often imagines he is talking to his long-dead mother and goes on long, nocturnal walks as he has problems sleeping.

That said, this isn't overall a gloomy read, either. While Thomson refuses to treat the crime with levity, Stella's relationship with her mother, Suzie, is often amusing and her efforts to control Stanley, the little poodle she has acquired, are particularly funny if you have ever owned a dog. While Stanley is evidently fond of her, she clearly isn't someone who is a natural around animals.

But for me, the reason why this is a standout read, is that in common with the rest of the series, the investigation into the crime slowly unravels. There are no speedy shortcuts. Between them, Stella and Jack piece together snippets of information to help discover who was doing what when the crime was committed. Some of those snippets prove to be wrong, or lead them astray – some we know from the start cannot be right, thanks to the flashbacks which give us, the reader, insights into aspects of the crime and its impact on the bystanders that Stella and Jack cannot have. Thomson's thorough, precise approach means this book is a joy. In attempting to find out who killed Helen, Stella and Jack need to talk to all the residents in the row of cottages running alongside the towpath – in getting to meet all the potential suspects and witnesses, we also are introduced to a cast of characters who bounce off the page with their vividness.

One of the bonuses in having read the previous books – though it isn't necessary to do so in order to enjoy The Dog Walker – is that we also have the pleasure of meeting up again with the likes of Suzie, Stella's mother, and Lucie May, journalist and former lover of Terry Darnell, Stella's father. I particularly enjoyed the role that Lucie played in this story and how it gave us a further insight into her character.

If you enjoy reading books more about the why than the gory deed itself – if you enjoy watching characters' motivations and secrets unpeeled, then track this one down. While there are many cold case mysteries out there – books of this quality don't come along all that often.

10/10

Linda Boa says

This is the first book I've finished since I took a (somewhat mysterious) seizure - I'm fine now, touch wood,

but I found my concentration levels have been shockingly poor for the last three weeks or so (I can't even think how long it's been - do you see what I mean?!)

Anyway - great read: WONDERFUL characters, and a superb yarn. I'll get a full review up on the blog in the next few days - I am running a bit behind - but I would thoroughly recommend this. A complex, meaty case that put me slightly in mind of *The Cuckoo's Calling*. It definitely won't be my last Lesley Thomson! She's a very impressive storyteller. And hopefully it's helped to restore my reading mojo!

Yvonne says

This book is set in present day and 1987, in London. A group of cottages are the setting for a disappearance, they run alongside the Thames, it is used often by dog walkers. One particular dog walker and jogger was Helen Honeysett, she went missing one evening in 1987 and her body was never found. The residents were questioned at the time, but nobody was arrested. In the present day setting, Stella, owner of Clean Slate, is asked to investigate the old case by Adam, the husband of Helen. Her colleague Jack is asked to discover strange noises in a different house. Between Stella and Jack they gradually work through both their cases, talking to residents, raking through old notes and newspaper clippings. It soon becomes obvious that not everybody is as they seem, they have things to hide, secrets that they want to keep, and their own reasons for not wanting to be involved.

This is the first book I have read by this author, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. It is very well paced and even though there are a lot of characters, they are memorable and unique. There has been obvious prior planning in this book as the underlying plots and stories are very intertwined. It has been very well laid out and includes a very helpful cottage plan at the beginning of the book, listing residents living in the houses in 1987 and also present day. Towards the later end of the story as Stella is working through her thoughts, the author shows the views from the perspective of Stella, for example, What was he / she doing? Could he / she have etc. The story comes to a very satisfying ending, leaving no unanswered questions. It had me hooked from the first few pages right through to the final page.

I would highly recommend this book to readers of crime and mystery books. I will be buying more of this authors books.

I would like to thank Portobello Book Blog <https://portobellobookblog.com/> and Lesley Thompson for this book that I was lucky enough to win in a giveaway.

Bookread2day says

Review on my book site www.ireadnovels.wordpress.com The Dog Walker is the best novel that Lesley Thomson has written. As I turned the pages I was curiously hungry for clues.

Dog walkers and joggers use the Thames towpath between Kew Bridge and Mortlake Crematorium.

The voice of little Megan is told with absolute precision that makes you believe in the character. As Megan and her friends notice a poster of missing Helen Honeysett she tells her friends that her dad told her that Helen was killed by her husband.

Police have no clue to what happened to the disappearance of 26-year-old Helen Honeysett. Adam Honeysett her husband was the last one to see her alive.

When Megan is questioned it appears that her dad, Steven Lawson hadn't told police that he had rescued Mrs Honeysett's dog. Could he have been the last person to see Helen Honeysett alive. Bette Lawson, Steven's wife was upset that he hadn't told her about Mrs Honeysett's dog.

The question that Bette is now asking herself were there many other things that her husband hadn't told her?

Megan lets out her secret that she had seen her father following Helen Honeysett to the towpath. The scenes are adding quite a long list of suspects who live in the Thames cottages who had a motive for murder.

There is Mr Honeysett who is playing the broken-hearted routine but he could have killed his wife and pushed her into the river.

Megan's dad Steven Lawson may have been having an affair with Helen Honeysett and there are of course many other suspect that come into the spotlight.

The question is who do you think had a motive to murder Helen?

I highly recommend The Dog Walker as it's screaming out who done it?

Margaret1358 Joyce says

This is a tightly-wound tale of a haunted house and murder most foul; a story of a part-time, aspiring detective, Stella, and her cohort, Jack, bent on solving a 27-year-old murder that took place on or near a walkway—a 'towpath'—fronting the Thames river, perpendicular to a row of heritage-type homes whose owners and respective tenants want nothing to do with the detective's probing questions. Romping through the pages are dogs. Various dogs, whose names are a challenge to keep straight, and, of course, one particular dog-walker who strolls at midnight, mostly, with a dog collar loosely slung around his neck. A delicious read!

Helen says

While I generally like to read books in series in order, I think you could read this without worrying too much about the back story of Stella and Jack (the ending does suggest that Jack may be moving on from his past). The setting as before is the river at Hammersmith, an unsolved crime from the 1980s, and an interest in the houses of west London. The author does like the surviving old places, houses both large and small which have escaped the attention of developers (in this case, a cottage has succumbed to one and to the current trend for basement excavation). The atmosphere is done really well: a hint of spookiness but with realistic explanations. I felt the conclusion was a bit rushed and melodramatic compared to the pace of the rest of the novel, but it is enjoyable nonetheless. (I did of course guess where missing Helen had ended up!) Dogs play an important part in this story and it turns out that Stella's dog Stanley has a past and a connection to the

case. There was a bit too much dog poo, generally, but don't let it put you off!

Maureen L Payne says

It's a dog's life.

Very good story or should I say two stories. It took me a while though to follow who was who and in which time period. Sometimes I couldn't figure out where you were. I think a map of the area at the beginning would have helped, showing the cottages in respect to the river etc.

I felt Bella shouldn't have been in the story,, she seemed pointless.

But all in all I felt it was a good story. Well worth reading.

Dorothy Whittington says

I struggled to get through this book. Too many characters, too many dogs, too much inane detail, too many pages. It could have been edited to half the length and would have lost nothing. Very disappointed.

Jo Chambers says

I quite liked this book. Good solution to the murder mystery. I found one of the detectives to be really unbelievable which put me off the book.

Jenny Carr says

Again, very atmospheric. I like the way she always weaves back in time, especially being familiar with those years.

My main gripe is too much language. Apart from that would have given five stars. Really kept me going till the end. I hope this isn't the end of the series.

Helen says

I found 'The Dog Walker' an easy read but the many coincidences to move the plot forward make it a bit incredible. To quote a few as examples, Jackie's husband is a witness in the central crime investigation, Lucie turns out to be Bette's sister, Stanley lived in the same house as Brian Judd...and so it goes on. I know life is stranger than fiction, but...So, not as highly recommended as the previous Detective's Daughter novels.

booksofallkinds says

This was my first time reading Lesley Thomson but it certainly won't be my last as THE DOG WALKER really captured my interest and held it to the very last line.

In 1987, new resident Helen Honeysett disappears without a trace and is never seen or heard from again. Fast forward to 2016 and Stella and Jack take on a cleaning case that may involve some ghostly encounters, but as they are asked to look into the cold case from 1987, who knows what dark and disturbing secrets they may uncover.

As the tale alternates between past and present, it is almost like two separate stories that are each fascinating by themselves, yet we know that they will converge at some point, as the truth of what happened all those years ago unfolds in front of our eyes. I really enjoyed the premise of this story - the secretive, small neighbourhood, and the idea that no matter how much time passes, the truth can always find its way to the surface. I don't want to give anything away so I won't say too much.

THE DOG WALKER by Lesley Thomson has its own distinct flair and style which stands out among the crime fiction genre, and I found the story really enjoyable, and the mystery completely gripping. With plenty of twists and turns, THE DOG WALKER by Lesley Thomson is well worth a read.

*I voluntarily reviewed this book from the Publisher

Andrea says

I won a copy of this book in a competition and thought it look like a good read, and it was, I really enjoyed it. There are lots of interesting characters in the book, many of which could have a motive for the murder. As Stella and Jack investigate the story unfolds and keeps you reading to the end to see what really happened.

Heather Duff says

There are two things that I love in a book, the first is a map and the second is a varied cast of characters.

The Dog Walker has both of these things, set in London it has a nice map which shows where the events took place and a great collection of characters young and old perfect for throwing you off the scent of the murderer in the midst.

Told over the course of twenty nine years, the story visits the disappearance of Helen Honeysett, a beautiful young woman who vanishes whilst running besides the Thames with her dog back in 1987. With her whole life ahead of her she never returns and everyone she knows is a suspect from her husband to her neighbours.

Fast forward to 2016, Stella Darnell a cleaner who is also an exception private detective is approached by a lady who lives in the area that Helen went missing in, she complains of a ghostly presence in her home, could it be the missing Mrs Honeysett?

Along with her partner in crime Jack, Stella sets out find out what happened to Helen but with so many possible suspects will she ever find out what happened to her?

It has a perfect atmospheric setting, London is a true star in the story, especially during the 80's POVs, it feels dark and gloomy, just a little bit dangerous.

The Dog Walker is told from past and present POV's from multiple characters and like all good crime novels you just don't know who is guilty and who is innocent. I love these types of novels, I hate a book that straight away you pinpoint who the murderer and The Dog Walker had me guessing right till the end.

Thank you to Head of Zeus for sending me a copy in exchange for an honest review.

Karen says

Another excellently crafted story by Lesley Thomson.

This time a young estate agent disappears in 1987 on the Thames towpath near Mortlake Crematorium, there are several suspects, but one person takes their life and it's assumed they killed the young woman and either buried the body or threw it into the Thames.

Fast forward to the present and Stella Darnell has been asked to investigate an apparent haunting in the newly and expensively refurbished home of Natasha Latimer. She wants a live-in housekeeper until the mystery is solved. The house is in the same row of terraces that Helen Honeysett, the missing estate agent, lived.

Lots of twists and turns and the identity of the real culprit is kept secret until almost the very end.

Jack Harmon, Stella's sidekick, and Stella revel in their awkward relationship but bounce ideas off each other and eventually between them solve the case.
