



The Hanging Valley

Peter Robinson

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When a faceless body is found in a tranquil valley just south of the village of Swainshead, Chief Inspector Alan Banks soon finds that no one in the village is willing to talk about it, except to say, “Not again.” An unsolved murder from five years before and the unsolved disappearance of a prominent local man’s girlfriend appear to be connected. As Banks delves deeper into the mystery, someone begins to intentionally slow down the investigation. When events take a turn, Inspector Banks must track his killer across the Atlantic and find a way to make a break in the case before time runs out. Fourth in the critically acclaimed Inspector Banks Mystery Series.

The Hanging Valley Details

Date : Published October 22nd 2013 by Scribner (first published 1989)

ISBN :

Author : Peter Robinson

Format : Kindle Edition 340 pages

Genre : Mystery, Crime, Fiction

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From Reader Review The Hanging Valley for online ebook

AndrewP says

Book 4 of the DCI banks series. I put books 3 and 4 on hold at the library a couple of weeks apart and and this one came in a couple of days before book 3. I don't usually like to read books out of order but need to here or wait another month for them to cycle around the library system.

This story begins when a body is found up the dale. Even when the body is identified the crime is still baffling. Lot's of people with connections to the victim but absolutely no motive. To solve this one DCI Banks and has to dig deep into the past and also take an excursion to Canada.

Like many good crime books it took a twist right when I thought I had it figured out. Looking forward to continuing with this series. It's probably worth mentioning that the setting for the books is a small town in the Yorkshire dales, not a big place as depicted in the TV series of the same name. There's a typical British feel to this as the police seem to spend a great deal of time in the pub for one reason or another. The audio narration by James Langton is great as he does a good number of Yorkshire accents.

Eric_W says

2.5 stars, perhaps. Good audiobook. An alternative title might be "Banks goes to Toronto." I always wonder when a local character takes off for other pastures as part of an investigation. Did the author just visit there and want to add some local color? Is Robinson a Jays fan?

Ostensibly, Banks has to travel to Toronto to find and interview a woman who may have information about an unsolved murder in Swainsdale that had occurred years before but may be linked to a more recent one.

The body of Bernard Allen, a man who had briefly relocated to Canada, is discovered buried in the woods in a remote area of Yorkshire. The investigation takes Banks to Toronto to search for a woman who might have known him. (And we get treated -- if that's the word -- to a Blue Jays game.)

Banks has to dig back into the past to determine the reason for the killing. I had difficulty getting a feel for the motivations of the characters and this is not one of Robinson's better efforts. His writing is good, but the characters in this volume lacked full development.

Some reviewers have complained about the ending, that somehow it was a shock. Perhaps, but only in its abruptness. This may be one of those cases where a good reader (James Langton) makes a bad book better. I had difficulty connecting with this story, but the excellent narration prevented switching to the off button.

Sandy *The world could end while I was reading and I would never notice* says

Another good solid read from Peter Robinson in this, the 4th in the Chief Inspector Banks series.

A faceless corpse is discovered by a tramper in a tranquil, hidden valley below the village of Swainshead.

To Chief Inspector Banks it seems that his latest case may be connected with an unsolved murder in the same area five years ago. But nobody is talking, either about the current murder or the past one.

And what happened to the woman who vanished at the time of the first murder. Is she too dead? Or has she simply chosen to disappear? And if so, why?

In this tale, Peter Robinson touches on the hangover from the class system that still lingers in small rural villages and domestic violence. His characters are gritty and realistic, his writing makes compelling reading.

Charlotte (Buried in Books) says

A man with his face bashed in while walking "The Hanging Valley", an unsolved murder of a private detective and the disappearance of a woman in the recent past. Are these things connected and what do they have to do with the local lords of the manor - the Collier Brothers.

The dead body is identified as Bernard Allen a teacher from the area who had emigrated to Canada after failing to find a job in this country. He had mentioned to the landlady of the B & B (whom he knew rather well), that he had been in touch with the woman who had disappeared (Anne Ralston). There's clearly a lot more to the story and anyone is telling.

I'm not entirely sure it was necessary for Banks to travel to Canada to track down Ralston. Even he himself said if he hadn't then one of the brothers wouldn't have ended up dead - in fact they probably would have told him everything - but I guess that wouldn't have made for such an interesting story. It all seemed rather forced though. The trip to Oxford explained a lot more - giving more background to the Colliers.

The landlady character - Katie, was bit too much for me with her religious background and rather old fashioned views.

Nicholas Collier was absolutely vile. I'm still a bit confused as to who actually killed who (am I just supposed to accept Banks's view on things).

I guess I just expected a bit more.

Marwan says

Wow, Peter Robinson's Books are getting better and better. I liked this one more than the previous three. I also love the bond between Chief Inspector Banks and his superior Gristhorpe, and I laughed when he said to Banks that he smokes like a bloody chimney.

The Story begins when a corpse has been discovered in a hidden valley near the village of Swainshead. its face has been crushed and the autopsy reveals that he has been dead for at least 10 days. After Identifying the body, some clues shows that it might be related to an unsolved crime of a private investigator (PI) who was murdered at the same village 5 years ago. To make matters worse, A woman by the name of Anne Ralston has disappeared a day before the body of the PI was discovered. Chief Inspector Banks thinks that the three incidents are related and it's up to him to find the link.

The novel has one hell of an ending, that's for sure. And I'm looking forward to read the rest of his books.

David Highton says

An early book in the Banks series with a murder on the fells near a tight insular Yorkshire Dales village where an unsolved murder took place 5 years ago. Banks is still the incomer from London but pursues the limited leads he has with determination. A good read, looking forward to tracking down the next in the series.

Ivonne Rovira says

A hiker on a fell-walking holiday near Swainshead stumbles across a maggot-infested corpse whose face had been ravaged — the second time the quiet of this Yorkshire village had been marred by murder.

Five years earlier a private detective from London, Raymond Addison, left the Greenock Guesthouse where he was staying in Swainshead and disappeared — until his corpse turned up a week later. No one knew why he was snooping around Swainshead. To add more mystery to Addison's murder — still unsolved — a local woman, Anne Ralston, had also disappeared. The policeman who investigated the murder has been promoted to superintendent, and Superintendent Gristhorpe and his clever subordinate, Chief Detective Inspector Alan Banks, know there must be a connection between Addison's death and Ralston's disappearance. And as Banks begins investigating the latest murder — one in which the murderer went to great lengths to forestall identification — he begins to wonder if the unknown man's death isn't connected to the fates of Addison and Ralston, as well.

Author Peter Robinson's novels just get better and better. As I progress through the series, at the end of each novel, I think, "Ah! This is the best one!" — only to have my new favorite supplanted by its successor. I loved *The Hanging Valley*, the fourth in the series — and what an ending! A true shocker! It's hard to believe that, based on my track record thus far, I will love the next one, *Past Reason Hated*, even more.

Thomas Strömquist says

A dead body is discovered near the village of Swainshead by a fell walking tourist, doubling the number of murders in the area for the last 5-year period. The first one has gone unsolved and at that time a local woman also went missing. Could some or all of these cases be related? After the investigation of a number of locals - the wealthy family, the serious farmer, the guest-house-owner couple (abusive husband, Carrie White-up-brought beautiful but damaged wife) - a trip to Canada - and an almost uncountable number of pints of bitter, Banks cracks the case, but is he late?

This is a story that actually needed to be fleshed out more, the first half did not engage much at all because it felt too thin. Banks family is mentioned on occasion, but I actually stated to doubt that they existed (could the darned guy spare 2 minutes for a phone call home?). This kind of mundane details is one of the things that bring a story to life I think.

I was pleasantly surprised by the ending though (perhaps not very happy, but still), so I'll definitely mark this down as an OK read, but I would suggest selecting one of the brilliant ones in the series instead.

Lori says

A man's body is found in Swainsdale. Who is he? How did he get there? When it turns out to be Bernard Allen, who grew up in the village but resided in Canada, Banks must investigate matters in both England and Canada before resolving it. The murder appears to be tied to an unsolved case from five years earlier. There's a bit of an unexpected twist at the end. Inspector Banks is quickly becoming one of my favorite fictional detectives, particularly as narrated by James Langton. I'm looking forward to the next installment.

Tom says

I was starting to worry a bit about this series, but I felt reassured after this addition to the series. With several murders taking place over a span of years in a quiet, sleepy town in the Yorkshire, Robinson does a great job of showing us the nuance and feel of this world. I could almost hear the Sherlock Holmes music (from the Jeremy Brett series) playing in the background. Well edited and tightly paced, readers of Brit mysteries will definitely enjoy.

Bill Lynas says

When a faceless corpse is found in a hidden valley Chief Inspector Alan Banks investigates. With this, the fourth (& so far the best) book in the series, Peter Robinson continues to add a few more layers of personality to his down to earth sleuth.

Banks shows that he can multitask. He questions suspects while smoking & drinking in the local pub, & he ponders clues as he drives along listening to some quality 1960's music.

I'm pleased to find that I am still enjoying these stories after four novels, & even more pleased that I still have at least another twenty to read.

Surreysmum says

[These notes were made in 1992:]. Less psychologically serious than *Past Reason Hated* (though it certainly starts with a gruesome enough corpse), this must have been a real romp to write, most especially the Toronto chapters. You see, the first clue that Inspector Banks & his team turn up to the identity of the mangled corpse is a cash register receipt from the Wendy's at Yonge & Dundas! Before he goes haring off after Bernie Allen's Toronto connections, however, Chief Inspector Banks tracks down his local ones in Yorkshire, and it turns out he's a local boy, and his death may be related to an unsolved one in the same village 5 years ago, together with the concurrent disappearance of a young woman. The 'usual suspects' in this case are: the two Collier brothers, Nicholas and Stephen, who are the local gentry, and have Oxford in their past; John Fletcher, a local farmer with ties to the Colliers; Sam Greenock, the guest-house keeper, social climber & wife-beater, & Katie, his wife, attractive & sexually very repressed, to whom numerous men seem attracted (including, briefly, Banks). Banks eventually drags from Katie that Bernie had come back to Swainshead (that's the name of the village) with the news that Anne Ralston, the woman who had run off, was alive & well & living in Toronto. Sensing that Anne might have passed on some knowledge to Bernie which, if used as blackmail, might have been the cause of his death, Banks takes off to Toronto, and (after a pub crawl which allows for a great deal of local description!) tracks her down in Feathers, in Scarborough. There Anne tells him of the night Steven Collier came to her distraught, and practically confessed to having committed the unsolved murder I mentioned earlier, because of something that had happened in Oxford. Ready to slam the cuffs on Stephen, Banks arrives back to find him dead of an alcohol-sleeping-pill o.d. Less than convinced that it's suicide, he continues to investigate the Oxford angle, & discovers that Nicholas, not Stephen, murdered a prostitute there (tho' the police did not prove it), and that the man killed in the first murder in Swainsdale was a private detective hired by the prostitute's parents. Tho' it is possible that Stephen killed both this detective & Bernie Allen to protect his brother, it is certain that Nicholas killed the girl and his own brother. All this too late, tho' - Katie, under sexual attack by Nicholas, goes off her rocker and murders him violently. The surprise ending is very good. The Toronto descriptions of Robinson's cronies at Feathers are perhaps a little self-indulgent!

Maddy says

PROTAGONIST: DCI Alan Banks

SETTING: Eastdale, UK

SERIES: #4 of 22

RATING: 4.0

WHY: DCI Alan Banks and his team are assigned to investigate the killing of a man whose rotting body was discovered in a wooded valley outside Swainshead. As it turns out, there have been other deaths in the area; and Banks feels that they are connected. Many of the locals come under suspicion. This is a series that I really like, but I did find the ending disappointing. Many important threads went unresolved.

Lawyer says

Full review to follow.

Judy Goodnight says

A complicated series of deaths: two definite murders, a possible accident, a possible suicide. are entangled in a complicated web of relationships. To untangle all the threads, Chief Inspector Banks goes so far as to fly to Canada to find a woman who may be able to shed light on the case.

I would have rated this at least one star higher if it hadn't ended the way it did. The police finally have it worked out & they're after the killer who we know is at that moment up to no good. So the police arrive & the scene is described (trying to not put any spoilers here) and that's it. The story just stops. I actually turned the next several pages in the book looking for an ending.

That is one thing that ticks me off in a book is for it to simply stop, not end. To me there's a crucial difference between those in writing. I'll continue with the series but I hope the author doesn't pull this kind of trick again.
