



The Devil's Workshop

Alex Grecian

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Scotland Yard's Murder Squad faces the most shocking case of its existence, in the extraordinary new historical thriller from the author of the acclaimed national bestseller *The Yard*.

London, 1890. Four vicious murderers have escaped from prison, part of a plan gone terribly wrong, and now it is up to Walter Day, Nevil Hammersmith, and the rest of Scotland Yard's Murder Squad to hunt down the convicts before the men can resume their bloody spree. But they might already be too late. The killers have retribution in mind, and one of them is heading straight toward a member of the Murder Squad, and his family.

And that isn't even the worst of it. During the escape, the killers have stumbled upon the location of another notorious murderer, one thought gone for good but now prepared to join forces with them.

Jack the Ripper is loose in London once more.

The Devil's Workshop Details

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Author : Alex Grecian

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From Reader Review *The Devil's Workshop* for online ebook

Amy Sturgis says

It appears that the *Murder Squad* series has crashed and burned.

One of the things I enjoyed most about the first two novels in this series was the character studies of those involved with or related to Scotland Yard's Murder Squad, especially detectives Walter Day and Nevil Hammersmith, forensic pathologist Dr. Bernard Kingsley, and his daughter Fiona. Here the spark that lit up each of the characters is absent. The relentless undercurrent of the story - the fact Walter Day is anxious about his impending fatherhood - is driven home with all the subtlety of a two-by-four to the face.

Another thing I enjoyed about the earlier novels was their sense of historical time and space as they dealt with post-Ripper Victorian London at the dawn of forensic science and professional detective method. Unfortunately, *The Devil's Workshop* contains some jarring anachronisms. Worse yet, Alex Grecian misses a tremendous opportunity as he spotlights the historical Jack the Ripper: rather than offering clues to the man's identity or motivations for his crimes during the Autumn of Terror, the Jack in this novel is a (post)modern caricature without past or consistency. His behavior fails to inform our understanding of the real Ripper killings; in fact, it blithely contradicts the Ripper's documented behavior in ways that are never addressed.

I'm not a squeamish reader, and I recognize violence can be used to strong effect in fiction (as it was, I would say, in the first book in this series). *The Devil's Workshop*, however, seems like a series of grisly and grotesque scenes held together by the thinnest of plots, and because the characterization fails so badly, the reader's lack of empathy with the characters robs the violence of its deeper impact. Rather than being emotionally powerful, these scenes simply became tedious.

I've been waiting for Grecian to engage the Ripper since his first novel in this series. I wanted to love this book. Unfortunately, I may be done with the *Murder Squad* instead.

Craig "NEEDS MORE DAMN TIME TO READ !!!!!" says

Great read! The villains were brilliant as well as the usual characters and atmospheric setting. I enjoyed it more because it featured a certain, ah, 'saucy' someone haha. Plus the ending was left open...

Rebecca McPhedran says

Another good installment in the Scotland Yard Murder Squad series. In this one, we are introduced to two new villains; Jack the Ripper and someone called The Harvest Man. An old nemesis comes back as well. Detective Day and his stalwart companion Hammersmith must race against the clock and round up four murderers who have escaped from jail. But was this jailbreak an accident, or a coincidence? A good read!

Ronna says

This third Scotland Yard Murder Squad Mystery is especially enjoyable. I am definitely not a fan of horror stories, but this book was very eerie, dark and compelling, drawing me into the plot almost immediately. Grecian has given Jack the Ripper a new start on his reign of murder and evil, giving him almost the persona of the antichrist. The literal underground of London added great historical interest to the plot also.

This book stands alone just fine, but I am personally glad that I read the previous two books in the series because knowing the background of the Murder Squad adds so much. Inspector Day and his wife are expecting their first child. Their friends and fellow workers get themselves in life threatening situation once again, and the expected child adds to their threatened lives. Life in 1890's Scotland Yard is very new for the times, and much different than today's investigative policeman.

I listened to this on Audible and the delivery was spectacular. The tone and breath of Jack's voice added an air of authenticity to the story that would be difficult to duplicate by just reading the story for yourself. Grecian's Murder Squad continue to please my sense of storytelling. He creates an atmosphere with his words that is marvelously mysterious, and well above the average story telling. Recommend beginning with THE YARD.

Sheryl says

3-1/2 stars: I'm a fan of the Murder Squad books and had high expectations for this book. I was so excited when I got an advanced reader's copy to review. While I did ultimately end up enjoying this book a lot, in many ways it wasn't quite up to par with the other two books in the series. The other books were detective stories with Day and Hammersmith working with Dr. Kingsley to solve cases and catch criminals. This book was more a thriller than anything else. There was no real case to solve, only escaped convicts to catch. Dr. Kingsley didn't work his forensic magic and Day and Hammersmith didn't do much detecting. There was a lot of chasing and we saw a lot of the inside of the criminals' minds, particularly Jack the Ripper's. That made for some very creepy and disturbing chapters.

The book was slow to start for me; it wasn't until about halfway through when it became a real page-turner and I couldn't put it down. But the page-turning was due more to a feeling of "oh my goodness, I can't believe this is happening" than to being drawn in by a mystery or an intricate case. I wish there had been more case and less "chase" and I certainly could have done with seeing less into the twisted mind of Saucy Jack but overall it was still an exciting book which elicited many gasps and shivers from me. I look forward to the next book in the series but hope Grecian goes back to writing more about the detectives, the doctor and solving cases.

****I got an Advanced Reading Copy of this book from Penguin's First To Read program.****

Jaclyn says

The best book in the series so far!

I'm not generally one for mysteries, but there's something about those set in a historical period that keeps me coming back for more. I discovered Alex Grecian a few years ago when I won book 1 of *The Murder Squad* series in a Goodreads giveaway, and I've been anxiously awaiting each installment since then.

The series is set in London following the Jack the Ripper murders and follows the changes to Scotland Yard after the horrific murders. Namely, the formation of the Murder Squad. Walter Day is one such inspector that forms the new Murder Squad and he's been changing the approach to investigation ever since. At this point in the series, with *The Devil's Workshop* readers are fairly familiar with Day and his team, including constable Hammersmith and Doctor Kingsley; however, the team is put sorely to the test in the latest installment.

Following the escape of four murderers from prison, Day and the rest of the Yard are sent to investigate and recapture the criminals before they can do any further damage. One of these criminals will be recognized from book one. However, it soon becomes clear to Day and company that there is more behind the apparent escape, and in fact, appears to be well planned out and has unleashed Jack the Ripper once again. This conspiracy threatens the lives of Day, his team, and those closest to him, and it seems that the team may not make it out of this investigation unscathed.

In my opinion, *The Devil's Workshop* is the best of the series so far. It was, by far, the most suspenseful of the series, as the violence hits closer to home for Day. I simply could not put this one down, which made for a rather groggy day at work the following morning. I did not know how this one was going to end, and I was worried that the characters that I'd come to love would be harmed irreparably, and really, some of them are. But to answer which ones, well that would spoil the book. Go forth and read!

As for the characters, this is really what has kept me reading the series. Yes, the mystery is great, but I love Walter Day and Nevil Hammersmith. They make such a great team and I love getting glimpses into their personal lives. The author has done such an excellent job at combining mystery with fully developed characters. And Grecian's a master at multiple points of view; this has added so much to these mysteries. While character development is slow (because of all the action and mystery) it's what keeps me coming back; I want to know more about each of them. I can't wait to see what happens next for the Murder Squad considering the ending of this book. Changes are afoot and I hope this team can stay together. Only reading the next book will determine this.

The Devil's Workshop was a fantastic read. If you like character-driven mysteries, this would be the perfect choice for you. And if you haven't read the first two books in the series, I urge you to start at the beginning. These atmospheric novels are fantastic and worth the time spent reading.

Originally reviewed [here](#).

Kathy says

First let me assure that *The Devil's Workshop* is a good, thrilling read, and a four-star rating by definition means "really liked it." Alex Grecian has created a series featuring Walter Day of the newly formed Murder Squad of Scotland Yard, a specialized squad introduced into the Yard in response to the lingering evil of Jack the Ripper and its release of murderous activity among the London population of 1890. Inspector Day is paired with Sergeant Nevil Hammersmith in this series, and their working relationship is most satisfying one in the stories. Walter's other two pivotal pairings in the series, with his wife Claire and with coroner/pioneer-

in-forensics-investigating Dr. Bernard Kingsley are brilliant pairings. Now, the reason for my four-star and not five-star rating. These four characters are such fine creations, but their development seems somewhat truncated to me. There is a disconnect in the personal that if fleshed out would deliver the broader dimensions of familiarization and full lives both on and off the clock.

In the Devil's Workshop, the story opens with a prison break created by the bizarre circumstances of a wild, unmanned train crashing into one of the prison blocks. It is a well-planned, arranged break by a group of "upstanding" men who have grown tired of what they deem unpunished criminals, men who have been convicted of murder but who aren't really suffering the consequences of their vile acts. Inspector Walter Day is sent for in the middle of the night, as are all personnel of Scotland Yard, to aid in the capture of four, maybe five, escaped prisoners who are of the worst, most depraved sort. Personally alarming to Walter is the escape of a murderer he recently helped put away, a murderer who knows where he lives and had approached Walter's wife there. With Claire being just days away from giving birth to their first born, it is an added worry to Walter in the manhunt. The "organization" that is responsible for the prison break had plans to quickly recapture the newly freed scum of society and begin teaching them lessons that prison deemed inappropriate, but nothing goes as planned, and havoc and tragedy ensue. Added to this nightmarish scenario is the reemergence of the nefarious Jack, who has some scores to settle and gruesome fun to enjoy.

So, the storyline deviates in this third book in the series from solving a fresh case or cases to rehashing old ones. While it is thrilling to follow the desperate chase to corral these reprobates, I did miss the innovative techniques of Dr. Kingsley in solving a murder and the well matched investigative prowess of Day and Hammersmith in unmasking a killer. However, I admit quite willingly that the last half to third of the book had me reading nonstop and staying up well past the midnight hour to finish the tale. Still a fan of Grecian and the Murder Squad series, I do look forward to more.

Benjamin Thomas says

In 1890, a prison break releases several vicious murderers onto the streets of London and all available police are gathered to catch the escapees. The fledgling murder squad is no exception and so previous series regulars Detective Walter Day and Sergeant Nevil Hammersmith join the hunt. They soon discover a mysterious organization has been taking justice into their own hands and their inept actions have not only led to the prison break but also the escape of a mysterious prisoner of their own being held secretly in London's undercity. None other than Jack the Ripper is loose once more.

I actually enjoyed this one a little more than the first two books in the series despite the Jack the Ripper theme, which I feel has been done to death (no pun intended). Whereas those first two books started out well as fairly straight-forward historical murder mysteries, they tended to go off the rails near the end. This one was engaging throughout and had a couple of sub plots that were also well done, including Walter's very pregnant wife and her resulting ordeal. The writing was well done, as usual, and I always like the 1890s London setting. The general goriness in this volume is substantially heightened but I suppose that comes along with Jack the Ripper territory. Consequently, one can classify this novel as much "thriller" as "mystery", perhaps more so.

This is the first of several Saucy Jack related novels within the larger series so it should come as no surprise that there are plenty of plot strings left unresolved, leading us into the next novel in the series, The Harvest Man, clearly a reference to one of the escaped prisoners who remains at large at the end of this book. Up till now, this was one series I had considered abandoning but my interest level has risen once again so I'll be

looking for that next book soon.

Heidi says

Creepy, evil, dark and full of mid-19th century London ambiance including several chapters below ground. This is definitely my favorite entry of the series so far and I predict the next will be as dark as this one.

One warning-- of all the series, this is the goriest and not for the faint of heart. Well-written but violence and sadism runs amok.

All your favorite characters are here (although not nearly enough Hammersmith) plus a few evil convicts on the run to keep the Murder Squad inspectors hopping.

And then there's Jack. And the Harvest Man.

Enough said... go read it yourself!!

Joan says

"The Devil's Workshop" is the third novel in the Scotland Yard Murder Squad series and this time the story starts off with a prison break wherein a select number of dangerous prisoners are allowed to escape, one of these prisoners was the murderous tailor Cinderhouse, from "The Yard" and now another gruesome killer, the Harvest Man, is on the loose as well as a mysterious prisoner who was being held in underground catacombs and continuously tortured for over a year. His identity and how he came to a prisoner was a shocker.

Nevertheless, it was somewhat disconcerting that the main characters are so inept when they come up against villainous adversaries. Understandably the Murder Squad is newly formed and Day and Hammersmith are diligent in their pursuit of justice but they seem to mostly find themselves overpowered in life and death situations. In their pursuit of Saucy Jack, and the four "escaped prisoners," both Day and Hammersmith are grievously injured and Hammersmith is kicked off the police force because he is so unkempt and careless in his zealotry.

There is much gruesome violence and gore in this second book. The book is full of suspense and very well written, but Grecian is displaying a penchant for killing off very likeable characters, which can be a turn off for me because if there is no one to root for, then there not much point aligning oneself with inconvenient deals of justice and honor. The writing is very good and I want to find out what's next for Inspector Day and Sergeant Hammersmith and look forward to seeing what happens in the book.

?Laura says

I love a dark, gritty Victorian crime novel, but for me this one fell somewhat short of the previous books in this series. It was a bit more "in your face" for lack of a better term and lacked the nuance and depth of the

previous novels. The plot did not feel as well developed and though one should expect a fair amount of gore in a book that includes Jack the Ripper as a central character, it felt somewhat gratuitous at times, as if the goal was shock rather than suspense. It did, however, leave me wanting to read the next book in the series and find out more about the Harvest Man, so overall I give it three stars.

Brittany says

I loved *The Devil's Workshop*, placed in 1890 London; this tale follows Detective Walter Day and Detective Nevil Hammersmith as they hunt down a group of escaped murders. Full of secret societies, Saucy Jack, deviant law men, pregnant wives with babies on the way, hidden tunnels, botched plans, and copious twists turns, and one must not forget about the delightfully evil villains, Grecian brings London's streets alive. I have always liked the tales of Jack the Ripper, but haven't found fiction that doesn't present him in predictable manner, that is until I read *The Devil's Workshop*. A five star book, I plan on purchasing this novel for quite a few of my family members, who I hope will enjoy this tale as much as I did. I can't wait to read the other books in this series.

Originally published at: <http://www.firsttoread.com/books/the-...>

Anne says

I received this book for free as part of a Goodreads giveaway. I've read the first of the Murder Squad series (unfortunately I ran out of time to read the second before the third arrived), and I do think the characters have been developed well. In reading this installation I also think that the author has worked hard to establish a series of dependable, likeable characters. With *'The Devil's Workshop'*, the entire story takes place over what seems to be roughly a day, and there is a lot of action and there are a lot of characters to keep track of, and at times I had to go back and reread sections to remember who was involved/what was going on. I thought that some of the longer conversations between one of the main characters and Jack the Ripper slowed down the plot a bit, and the wife of the same main character going into labor in a background plot felt like just another hurdle to get over in trying to resolve the main conflict that drove the heart of the novel.

Ashley Marsh says

While I feel that this is a definite departure from the first two books, I still thoroughly enjoyed it. The writing, as always, was simple and easy to follow. There weren't really any surprises or plot twists in this, and I felt completely disconnected from Day and Hammersmith, so there are definitely things lacking in this installment. I loved reading about Jack, but I'm hoping for a return to the feel of the first two books as I move on in the series. It was a quick, fun read. I enjoyed it.

Siobhan says

The third book in Alex Grecian's Murder Squad series and another brilliant read. Once again we follow the

story of our beloved characters as they deal with trouble in Victorian London. This time, however, they're not digging to the bottom of a murder instead they are chasing criminals who have escaped from prison. Through this we see old and new villains alike as they try to avoid the Murder Squad and being sent back to prison.

I will admit that I was a bit put off by the notion of Jack the Ripper roaming the streets once more, as I especially loved this series as it occurred after Jack the Ripper was done with his crimes. However, that being said, I was not at all disappointed by what I was given. It was not entirely what I expected but it was a gripping read on that front, offering us an entertaining prospect with Jack returning to the streets of London and causing more havoc for the police. For anyone else who is tentative about this prospect know that we are not dealing with Jack roaming the streets killing off more females as we're given a different insight into the life of the notorious killer, a very unique and interesting take on what happened.

Jack isn't the only new character we are introduced to in this book. The mysterious Inspector March that Day has inspired to be like throughout the first two books makes an appearance here, allowing us to view the relationship between Day and the man he views as a mentor and father figure of sorts. There is also the reappearance of what some might deem beloved characters from the first book that may have missed during *The Black Country*.

Moreover, there seems to be more of an insight into the personal lives of characters – especially the lives of Walter and Claire Day – throughout. Whilst there isn't as much Hammersmith and Doctor Kingsley action they both do appear to offer up their usual loveable idiosyncrasies and the chain of events surrounding them is especially interesting. Hammersmith in particular (although this may be a somewhat bias view as he quickly became my favourite character when reading the series) has an interesting story towards the end of the book which will leave you excited to see where things go in the future.

Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed this book. In fact, if the truth is to be known, I enjoyed it a lot more than I enjoyed *The Black Country* putting it almost on par with *The Yard*.

Any fans of the Murder Squad need to pick this up now!
