



## Blackstone and the Heart of Darkness

*Sally Spencer*

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## **Blackstone and the Heart of Darkness** Sally Spencer

A sadistic killer is targeting teenage girls.

A horrific pattern is emerging, with each new corpse horrendously mutilated – in precisely the same way.

But the victims aren't just any girls.

They are the children of England's aristocracy.

Inspector Blackstone, of the Metropolitan Police, seems to be the only man in the country who stands a chance of catching 'the Northern Slasher'.

Can Blackstone find the killer before he chooses his next victim?

When Blackstone receives a letter from an old army comrade, he is plunged into the middle of an even darker horror...

'Blackstone and the Heart of Darkness' is the next thrilling instalment in the Blackstone detective series.

Praise for Sally Spencer:

"Vivid characters, a dazzling plot, authentic period details, and plenty of surprising twists make this latest effort by Sally Spencer an outstanding choice for historical mystery fans" - Booklist

"This new series from the author of the Chief Inspector Woodend novels features a nicely captured Victorian ethos, solid prose, and winning subplot diversions. Anne Perry fans and devotees of Victorian-era mysteries will enjoy this new historical. For most collections" - Library Journal

Sally Spencer worked as a teacher both in England and Iran - where she witnessed the fall of the Shah. She now writes full time.

Endeavour Press is the UK's leading independent publisher of digital books.

## **Blackstone and the Heart of Darkness Details**

Date : Published November 5th 2014 by Endeavour Press (first published 2007)

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Author : Sally Spencer

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## **From Reader Review Blackstone and the Heart of Darkness for online ebook**

### **Carlin says**

A great thing about BookBub free books is you can find a new character you really enjoy. Such is the case with Sam Blackstone, a Scotland Yard detective in a series set around the turn of the twentieth century. Although a series, I definitely enjoyed this mystery as a stand-alone novel and definitely will seek out more books about Blackstone. I liked the way several stories tied together in the end from Salt mines in Marston to brothels in London. It is always interesting to see how crimes were solved without all the modern, scientific advances made during the last century. One character is a woman forensic pathologist who has to contend with suspicion about her field as well as prejudice about her gender. It will be fun reading more about these interesting characters.

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### **Jeff Parker says**

I wish I had started with the first entry in the series but even starting here was an enjoyable experience. The characters are interesting but I wish more time had been spent with Dr Carr. There are enough proofing mistakes that you will notice them but not so many that it detracts from the story or joy of reading this tale. Another reviewer made the same comment particularly mentioning the often used "Torn" in place of Tom. It happened so often that I assumed it was a turn off the century British nickname.

The story is definitely worth a read. The use of several arcs is very well done and I feel that in the end they are tied together rather nicely. I especially enjoyed Patterson's story line.

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### **Sandra Knapp says**

#### **A bit of a surprise**

Nicely written, and very suspenseful. Had me so twisted around I didn't know which end was up, but as it moved forward, everything made perfect sense. I totally enjoyed it, from start to finish.

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### **Nancy says**

Interesting lead characters, but they needed more fleshing out. Patterson was the most well-done. It seemed that the crime Patterson was following was connected to the other one about the mutilated girls. The author pointed us in that direction with Huggins and Bickersdale possibly being the lout and the nicely dressed gentleman who stopped the lout from attacking one of the madam's girls. But it wasn't clearly delineated. And who were all the young girls who were killed instead of the upper class girls? No mention was really made of them, as if they really weren't all that important. Maybe that was the point. Nothing was said about whether there'd be any effort to track down the missing high society girls who were sold into the white slave

trade, either. A few too many loose ends to be totally satisfying. Not sure I'll read more in the series after all. Oh, and there were at least a dozen proofreading misses, especially calling Tom Yardley TORN Yardley several times.

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### **Susan says**

Inspector Blackstone is sent north away from London to catch the sadistic killer of young girls whose mutilated bodies are found in several different counties.

Shall look for others in the series starting with the first tale.

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### **Alan Marston says**

When I acquired my Kindle copy of this book in October 2015, there were two things that for some reason I did not know. Firstly that it is the sixth in a series, and I had not read any of the previous five, and that the author is not a lady called Sally Spencer!

Having said that I have to say that I thoroughly enjoyed this book which in some ways reminded me of the writings of Edward Marston, set in a slightly earlier era, but with similar language.

Sam Blackstone is one of Scotland Yard's most successful detectives, but is here embroiled in the Cheshire countryside in both its beauty and its ugliness. The harshness of work in its salt mines is vividly portrayed as is the cruelty with which some people behave towards others, with no regard for their safety or personal feelings. Canals also feature quite heavily in a cleverly constructed plot regarding murder and kidnap, enhanced by Blackstone's connection with a former subordinate of his in Afghanistan, Tom Yardley, now working in those salt mines. The characters are, for the main part, highly believable, and their interaction is both accurate of its time and interesting, if somewhat different from what we would expect today. I am mindful of certain recent cases in this country that are not totally dissimilar to that involved here.

All in all a very good read, although I am not sure that I have time to visit Sam's previous adventures – only time and other reading material will tell!

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### **Catherine Nightlinger says**

#### **Intriguing mystery!**

A plot that has many twists and turns and interesting characters. This is a story that you can't put down.

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### **Joanne Cohen says**

#### **Twists and Turns**

A thoroughly good read. It starts slowly and suddenly you are entrapped. The woman coroner is a nice touch for that era. Very reminiscent of Inspector Pitt mysteries. I am looking forward to the next book and seeing if Blackstone and Ellie continue to make a great team.

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### **Carl says**

Sally Spencer's "Blackstone and the Heart of Darkness" is the 6th entry into this Victorian historical mystery series, and it is arguably the best in the series to date. CAUTION: This same book is also published under Alan Rustage. These two books are the SAME book published at times under different titles and authors; however, Sally Spencer is in reality Alan Rustage. Confusing - "yes" - but if you are one who likes Victorian historical mysteries, then I do strongly recommend this series to you. Just be careful not to buy the same book twice! I almost did.

In this Blackstone adventure, Sam receives a worried letter from Tom Yardley, an old army comrade who once saved his life. Inspector Sam Blackstone leaves to the salt mining village of Marston, but by the time he arrives there, Yardley has died in a freak mine explosion.

Spencer's "Blackstone and the Heart of Darkness" - the 6th entry – is a book where it is better to have read all the earlier ones first. The plot is carefully crafted into three cases or sub plots. Blackstone's onetime lover, forensic scientist Dr. Ellie Carr, is investigating the brutal killings of teenage girls from Victorian London's wealthiest families. Meanwhile, Blackstone's sidekick, Sgt. Archie Patterson, is trying to expose a brothel madam who specializes in providing her clients with child prostitutes. Meanwhile, Sam himself is trying to uncover a smuggling ring and solve the murder of his friend in the village of Marston. I loved the story; my only objection would be the ending. I thought there would be more of a resolution to the multiple plots at the end of the book (a coming together of these three characters). I have enjoyed this series on my Kindle, and I will continue reading them as I have grown to care for these characters. Regardless, this is a fine period mystery with a clever plot, so if you enjoy the Victorian, mystery genre, you should give Spencer's Inspector Blackstone series a try – but start with the first: "A Rendezvous with Death."

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### **Karunakaran N. says**

Blackstone and the Heart of Darkness by Sally Spencer.... Reminding the Conan Doyle mysteries... Impeccable characters, dwelling well on the story line.

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### **Cathy says**

3-1/2 stars. Good story, but lots of unresolved issues at the end: What happened to those kidnapped? Was there any reconciliation between Blackstone and the local detective?

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### **Wiebke Kuhn says**

Blackstone, a detective in late 19th century England, and his colleagues and female doctor have to figure out

a series of murders of girls, a smuggling ring, and the death of a friend. The descriptions show 19th century England quite nicely, and the characters are quite appealing. I am glad I stumbled over this series.

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### **Alvin Bakun says**

#### **Two lines merging into one.**

The strange case of two different lines of investigation turning into one. Showcasing the actual conditions present during the early twentieth century. Great story and mystery.

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### **Ann says**

Very good mystery -- Victorian era. Three disparate investigations divide three investigators who normally work together. . . .there are murdered girls from good families, an investigation into child prostitution, and a suspected smuggling ring. This is the 6th in the series and I actually hadn't read the earlier ones but I plan to now. Still there was no discontinuity or confusion even starting the series in the middle.

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### **Marilyn Watson says**

Very good English Murder Mystery with two different plots that tie in together nicely at the end. So many times the characters can't hold your interest but in this case it was managed nicely. I found this a perfect read and setting for an England set in a period time frame. I recommend reading the book.

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