



Murder at the Wake

Bruce Beckham

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ONE WEEK AFTER THE DEATH of his 93-year-old twin brother, the reclusive Declan Thomas O'More is found murdered in his study at the ancestral family estate, rambling and isolated Crummock Hall.

Suspicion immediately falls upon his five great nieces and nephews, who between them stand to inherit the considerable proceeds of their grandfather's will - along with a valuable library of antiquarian books, a collection that is Declan's lifetime work.

And yet each member of this generation - which includes a famous actor and a successful author - is apparently wealthy in their own right. Why would any of them murder their great uncle?

DI Skelgill and his team must unravel a mystery that not only harks back to the tragic drowning of the children's parents in Crummock Water in the 1980s, but may also have its roots in the despicable Triangular Trade that enriched so many British and Irish merchant families in the eighteenth century.

Murder at the Wake Details

Date : Published July 3rd 2016 by Lucius

ISBN :

Author : Bruce Beckham

Format : Kindle Edition 266 pages

Genre : Mystery, Fiction

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From Reader Review Murder at the Wake for online ebook

Karen says

The O'More family seems cursed. Not more than a week after the death of the head of the family, Sir Sean, his twin brother Declan is found murdered in his study. Sir Sean's heirs (his late daughter's children) are the primary suspects but what is the motive? Due to the terms of Sir Sean's will on Declan's death, the heirs must vote on what to do with the family estate, keep it going or sell out and split the proceeds. The heirs all seem to be successful in their own right: a high powered banker, a popular actor, a successful writer, an accountant, and a society party-planner.

DI Skelgill investigates the family and wonders if it all ties in with the "Accident" which ended the lives of Sir Sean's daughter and her husband who drowned in a boating accident back in the 80s when their five children were very young. Then there's the angry tenants who claim they were robbed of their rightful inheritance by the O'More family. Add in a link to the slave transport as part of the Triangular Trade which was the source of the O'More fortunes, a smooth-talking family lawyer, and an enthusiastic book dealer and the case just seems to get muddy.

This is my favorite of the Skelgill books so far. The characters have really settled into place and I think I'm getting more of an understanding of how Skelgill processes the facts and emotions connected to a case.

Jillian says

I give this one three and a half stars. I probably need a break from Skelgill. The plots are becoming a bit formulaic - a death that appears on available evidence, either as suicide, accident or murder by obvious person, Skelgill's instinct is not satisfied, he uses his fishing and countryman's skills to investigate, his rival complains to their boss and threatens to take over with more orthodox methods and swifter results, loyal Sergeants dig up evidence and Jones contributes an insight that helps crack the case.

I was interested enough to keep reading, but think I've had enough for now.

Betty says

This is my favorite so far. Getting used to the tense and point of view and am totally addicted to Dan Skelgill at this point. Think I have a slight crush on him. Don't want the series to end but I see that it will all too soon.

Jennifer says

Yet another great mystery series I'm going to have to start from the beginning!

I won this book via Goodreads Giveaways and found it quite charming. I love a good mystery, and this one didn't disappoint!

Lori says

This seventh in the series featuring Inspector Skelgill leaves this reader dissatisfied. Almost from the beginning the narrative failed to captivate me. Many parts read much more like stage directions than an actual novel. The novel centers around the murder of Declan, followed by that of his brother. The chief suspects are the man's children, but they lack strong motives. Skelgill puts the pieces together at the end, finding motivation in an unlikely turn. It appeared the author tried to throw around modern conveniences such as cell phones to make the work seem more contemporary than most of it is. Although it is allegedly set in the Lake District of Cumbria, the author often thrown in Irish references, confusing the reader about the location. I received a Kindle version through Goodreads Giveaways. I do not plan to pursue other titles in the series.

Palmreader says

There is something a little annoying about this series. And I guess it's Skelgill himself. It just never stops with the maundering. Plots are ok, but the fishing is getting really boring. Just like fishing.

Melanie says

I received this book through the goodreads giveaways program.

The first few chapters of this book were really difficult for me to get into, I almost put it down. I don't know if it is just the difference in culture, but I just found it very hard to follow. Once I got into it and actually figured out what was going on, I was at least interested. But I would not say it was gripping, nor is it a thriller.

Essentially a man is found dead in his Library. The police respond, and there are seemingly few suspects. His brother's children stand to inherit, but they all seem to have alibis. The detective is kind of like a Columbo sort, where he seems to not make any sense, but is the one to be able to put all the pieces together, eventually solving the mystery.

Karen says

I really enjoy the “giveaways” provided by Goodreads. The giveaways program allows me the opportunity, when I win, to find a new author or new series to add to my reading list or, just as importantly, to find out that the book/author will not be placed on my reading list - both important reasons to enter these giveaways.

Having said that, I'm happy to say that I won a free book in the Goodreads Giveaways and I'm adding the author to my “to-read” list! I received “Murder at the Wake,” #7 in the “Inspector Skelgill series, by Bruce Beckham, and what a mystery it was!

An upper-crust family in England and the family home are both described in detail when Inspector Skelgill is placed on the case of the murder of recluse Devin Thomas O'More one week after his death. There are a

variety of characters that could be placed at the site of the murder and/or motive for the murder. There is a twin brother, five nieces and nephews, and the main servant (avoiding the use of "butler" here as in "the butler did it"; too stereotypical for this story!) who are all possible murderers. There is a story line involving the deceased's library of "thousands of books", another family who claims to have had their claim to the estate taken away from them years ago, and the tragic deaths of the deceased's parents. Keeping all these story lines separate is a little intimidating but the author does a good job of tying in reminders for the reader of "who is who" and where they belong in the story.

I think what I enjoyed most was the language in this story. I used my dictionary often and I mean that in a good way. One word can sometimes take the place of several words to relay the same meaning. Beckham does an outstanding job of keeping proper English alive but does not use it so that it bogs down the story line. The flow of the writing is wonderful, I easily got lost in the descriptions of the house, the snow that was an early part of the story, the land surrounding the house, and the bars that the characters frequented. I felt like I was on the outside of each building looking in – Beckham paints a very vivid image.

Reading number seven in the "Inspector Skelgill Investigates" series, I found it very easy to slip into the story. I normally read a new author from the first published book to the current but #7 stood on its own.

This is an interesting and educational read about England, some of the history of the area of the house, and a good mystery to boot. Enjoyable and recommended!

Elka says

Good mystery. The voice is arch, bordering on contemptuous, so I'm not sure how I feel about that.

Patricia German says

The wake

The story is good just very disjointed. It makes you think but if it wasn't so disjointed you would enjoy it more. The author loves "big words" as some would say and because of so many you really don't enjoy the book as much. I enjoy big words but as I write them down and at the end of the chapter look up their meaning. Sometimes these words make the reading a not dry of a read. The story is good but too disjointed to really be enjoyable. I hope his next book is much better!

James Larson says

I have read 5 of these Skelgill Investigates books and have really enjoyed them. I like the description of the landscape. There are a number of words that I am not familiar with, being that everything takes place in the UK, but it is so easy to look up the definition when reading on the kindle. I also enjoy the humor and the interaction between Skelgill and Leyton and Jones. I look forward to reading the rest of the series. I would recommend reading these books as they are a fun and enjoyable read.

Judy says

This is the first book I've read in this series, and it turns out it's the 7th. That may be why it took me a little while to sort out the characters at the beginning of the story, but once I got going I enjoyed it. It feels a bit like a mystery from the golden age of mysteries (think Agatha Christie, as indeed one of the characters alluded) with the suspects stranded due to snow in a country mansion. However, it is contemporary enough to have them using helicopters, cell phones, and all manner of current forensic technology. One of the detectives also uses Cockney rhyming slang, which is a bit difficult for those of us who are not very familiar with it, but it didn't make that much difference to my enjoyment of the story. I think I'll go back to the first one and give this series a proper try. 3.5 stars.

Sunny Pisenti says

Enjoyed the plot. Learned some new language which I don't mind. I did skim the landscape description after awhile.

Would have liked a little more character development. Overall I would read the next one. The main character grew on me

Patricia Mccammon says

A good English mystery although difficult to understand some of the dialect. It reads more like a novel written back in the 40's but modern with the use of cellphones and computers. Still enjoyable. Won this in a Goodreads Giveaway.

Teri says

New to this author but it was a good book. I really enjoyed the characters and setting.
