



Dead Beat

Val McDermid

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When private investigator Kate Brannigan is asked to find a missing person as a favour, she accepts - after all, it's got to be better than the last two weeks of staking out houses and warehouses from dawn until midnight, and living on motorway service station food.

The missing person in question is a songwriter, Moira Pollock, and Kate's search leads her into some of the seediest parts of Leeds and Bradford. But what she doesn't realise, is that finding Moira is just a prelude to murder . . .

Dead Beat Details

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Author : Val McDermid

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From Reader Review Dead Beat for online ebook

Cathy says

It's not as good as the Tony Hill series but it is so much better than the Lindsay Gordon series that I just read. Kate Brannigan is a likable character. The story line is believable. This is a fun series to read .

Domagoj Kaucic says

It was an OK book for me. And one of the books where you like characters more than the plot. It didn't grabbed me and sucked me in as much as I expected (Robert Galbraith recommended this). It was a good mystery with a proper detective, but It wasn't something distinctive. It wasn't bad either and I understand writing style can get better so I'll try with her Tony Hill series.

Ken says

Comparisons to Sarah Paretsky's V.I. Warshawski series are unavoidable. Both writers create tales of female investigators who solve crimes in a straightforward and down-to-earth manner, and also take the reader on a detailed tour of a particular locality. Paretsky's novels are set in the greater Chicagoland area, and McDermid takes the reader to the Manchester/Bradford/Leeds areas of northern England. DEAD BEAT features Manchester-based detective, Kate Brannigan, as she attempts to solve the murder of a Mancunian soul singer, and determine who is running a fake merchandising ring that is operating in Greater Manchester, England.

This is the first in the collection, and although a bit formulaic, if you are a fan of these kinds of detective novels, this one will not let you down.

Brenda says

Bill Mortensen and Kate Brannigan made up the private investigators who investigated fraud and white collar crime, so when Jett, singer, songwriter and musician asked her to find an old friend of his as a favour, she was hesitant. But with the grudging approval of her partner, she took it on. Never having done a missing person before, Kate got right into it, and before long she was deeply involved in the sleazy side of London, discovering parts she hadn't known had existed.

As she dug deeper, Kate was horrified when suddenly there was a murder victim in the middle of it all. All of a sudden the investigation took a huge turn – the police were involved, and the suspects were numerous. Who would benefit from the death; who had motive and opportunity? Would Kate find the killer or would the police get it wrong?

This novel is the first in the PI Kate Brannigan series and quite enjoyable. The intrigue was well set out, the plot plausible. I had the murderer picked quite early, but the red herrings were well placed! I'll certainly be

reading more about PI Kate Brannigan and her exploits!

Jo-Ann says

A nice, fast paced little read to offset weightier and more ponderous books. I found the characters engaging, the language clear and the plots clever. I'll read more from Val McDermid in this genre. Footnote: the characters are diverse!

Stephen Bigger says

Enjoyable, so buying a few more by this author. Good to have a tough female private investigator.

Jennie Rigg says

I vacillated between 3 and 4 stars for this. I'm not keen on Kate as a protagonist, but I think the trademark flashes of McDermid humour and the precision of the geography in the places I know well did enough to bump it up for me.

The other point in its favour is the evocative talent McDermid has for anchoring a book in a time period. Everybody in this book smokes. The food and drink choices are as blatantly nineties as prawn cocktail and Cinzano bianco are seventies. They all think shell suits are the pinnacle of fashion. It was like being transported back in time to when I was a teenager and living through this stuff.

So, yeah, I can forgive it a slightly annoying protagonist and the fact that the murder doesn't even happen till over half way through just for the pure, oozing nostalgia.

Shirlee says

As always, Val McDermid delivers. However, this early book doesn't rank among my favorites.

Sharon says

Kate Brannigan is a private investigator and her boyfriend Richard is a music reporter. After attending a concert Kate is asked by Jett a singer to find his former girlfriend, Moira. Kate knows this is something she doesn't normally do, so convincing her partner, Bill Mortensen to take the case will be a challenge.

As Kate looks for answers to Moira's whereabouts she discovers places of London that she wished she never had. Just when things look like they might be coming together, Kate finds herself in the middle of a murder case. Now with the police involved, Kate needs to find out why and who wanted the victim dead. Will they

find the murderer in time before there are more victims?

This is the first book I've read by Val McDermid and it definitely won't be my last. If you enjoy a good mystery or thriller then I recommend you read *Dead Beat*. Well worth reading.

Donna says

Val McDermid mystery

Amanda says

I wasn't really a fan of this one - maybe because it's one of McDermid's older ones, but it felt too... conversational and unpolished. The plot seemed just a tiny bit too unlikely to make any of it feel plausible, but I also didn't really care for Brannigan and her methods a whole lot.

Christian Schwoerke says

I came to this genre novel via my reading on the doings of Manchester, England, as I'd recently moved here from the United States. McDermid was cited as introducing a PI who worked a Manchester beat, as was Cath Staincliffe, whose novel *Go Not Gently* I read recently with the same impulse to get at more of what the city's culture is about.

While ably telling her story about Kate Brannigan, PI and co-owner/operator of Brannigan and Mortensen, McDermid introduces many references to the city's culture and geography, in particular at the beginning of the novel, when there are references to the music scene in Manchester circa late 80s and early 90s. Brannigan tells the story, and she is a long-time resident of Manchester, and is aware of its history and easily knows her way around the city and environs). It's a smart, matter-of-fact voice that Brannigan assumes, though she is prone to sarcasm in confrontational dialog. She is good at accommodating her lover, and she is without illusion about what a man can and cannot do for her.

The defunct Hacienda night club (now remembered by the apartment complex that borrows its name) gets several mentions; the Ardwick area where Brannigan lives near the University and College of Manchester is described as dicey; Brannigan's home is within walking distance of her office, located near the BBC (Oxford Road and Charles Street), which was demolished in 2012 after it moved its operation to Salford; and Moss Side is presented as the gang-infested area just south of the city center where the novel's two principals (musicians Moira and Jett) grew up.

There are some additional excursions east to Leeds and Bradford, which lend some regional color about that area of Lancashire, though none of it cheery in the blasted areas Brannigan is investigating in 1991 (Lancashire was site to some bad depression in this era, and there were race riots as well). In the several scenes where trips are made here and there, the references to major roads helps to establish one's place on real mental map of the city and its environs. McDermid does a very good job of placing her character in a real setting and giving that setting significance, though it's at a fictional estate—Colcutt Manor, in Cheshire—that the murder occurs and many of the interviews before the final reveal in the Manor's drawing

room, which Brannigan herself archly calls “melodrama.”

Brannigan’s job is initially to find a rock star Jett’s former band mate and fellow song writer, a woman who vanished under a cloud of addiction. Brannigan does find her, off drugs and the street, and in a happy relationship with another woman. Moira, however, does decide to attempt a reunion with Jett, which causes upset in his small, cloistered entourage. Moira is six weeks later found dead, and it’s Jett’s wish to have Brannigan get at the bottom of things, in parallel with the operations of the police. Brannigan gets a few breaks and remains a step ahead of the police, with whom she butts heads a few times. Having extracted stories and motives from all of the principals, Brannigan has an ah-ha moment, and uses a bluff to flush out the killer when all (including the police) converge in the drawing room.

The novel is fast-paced, and there are a couple of car chases, but there is no violence punctuating this detective’s peregrinations, which include wiping up the details of a merchandise knock-off (“sneid”) operation she’d been working on prior to the current Moira murder. It’s a quick, engaging read, and Brannigan seems a detective worth meeting again.

Kay Robinson says

The first of the Kate Brannigan series, and as always I've held off until I'm ready to start at the beginning. Quite a different style of working than Lindsay Gordon, not to mention lifestyle of course, and the change to a leading character that starts with a purpose rather than stumbling into the situation as the latter did. Fast paced, plenty of action and even placed in a location that I know so well, although the error in calling Ardwick Green 'Ardwick Common' seemed strange to me as the only incorrectly named location. That said I am rather biased toward books that are set in the North West, particularly in places I've lived and/or worked in. I'm already lining up the reading copies in order to follow Kate's adventures.

Lucy Takeda says

I appreciate novels with smart, independent women. Kate definitely qualifies. Having a mystery tied into the music scene makes it even more enticing!

Kate and her partner usually deal with white collar crimes. However, her romantic partner has a friend that asks Kate to do a missing person search. Kate reluctantly agrees and locates the woman, who is then murdered.

Ms Rona Benzie says

Good read

But not her best and I’m not doing more words because they are apparently required. And good night to you

Helen says

Heard an interview with Brannigan on BBC World Service not long ago and thought I'd give her a try. This book was just OK, but I'm willing to keep going with the author because other reviewers have noted that she gets better. I've just switched over to her Tony Hill series which is crazy gory and moves along at a much faster pace. So far I'm liking it better.

Melinda says

After the sheer genius of the Tony Hill series and others such as A Place of Execution, this wasn't quite what I hoped it would be. Still, it was a good read and I won't give up on the Kate Brannigan series just yet!

Heather says

I'm glad this is not the first book of Val McDermid I have read, if it had been I am sure it would have been my last. I struggled all the way through it as I found it dull and many of her characters wooden and unbelievable. ms McDermid has gone on to write some great who dunnits, this just wasn't one of them.

Tessa in Mid-Michigan says

I'm not crazy about this, but it is well enough. 3.75 maybe,

Marnie Krüger says

The joy of rereading

First Sentence: *I swear one day I'll kill him.*

I've read most of the Kate Brannigan Series already, but I never read them in order. So I've decided this year I'm gonna do it right.

I think these books don't impress me as much as McDermid's newer books, because just that! McDermid grew so much as an author, her writing and plots have become so much better, so much more complicated.

I am sorry I didn't read these books first, it would have mean so much more to me that way.

