



## Crossword Mystery

*E.R. Punshon*

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## Description

What could be more innocent than a crossword puzzle? A game to while away an idle hour, a diversion for the lonely. And yet its cunning formula could still be turned to sinister purpose. The curious crossword devised by Mr. George Winterton turned out to be part of a game for high stakes – it was the creation of a man whose brother had just drowned and who feared for his own life. Yet the dog hadn't barked...

When Detective-Constable Owen (B.A. Oxon, pass degree only) arrives in the picturesque village of Suffby Cove, he is faced with the mystery of an appallingly ingenious murder – one whose ramifications reach out of England to the continent, and touch the lives of many men and women.

*Crossword Mystery* is the third of E.R. Punshon's acclaimed Bobby Owen mysteries, first published in 1934 and part of a series which eventually spanned thirty-five novels.

This edition features a new introduction by crime fiction historian Curtis Evans.

“What is distinction? The few who achieve it step – plot or no plot – unquestioned into the first rank. We recognized it in Sherlock Holmes, and in *Trent's Last Case*, in *The Mystery of the Villa Rose*, in the Father Brown stories and in the works of Mr. E.R. Punshon we salute it every time.” *Dorothy L. Sayers*

## Crossword Mystery Details

Date : Published June 1st 2015 by Dean Street Press (first published January 1st 1934)

ISBN :

Author : E.R. Punshon

Format : Kindle Edition 260 pages

Genre : Mystery, Classics, Detective

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## From Reader Review Crossword Mystery for online ebook

### Shauna says

Written in 1934 this book sets out to be an intellectual puzzle. Trouble is brewing in Europe, Hitler is in power in Germany and around the world there is a fear of what might happen to world stability and particularly money. Two retired stockbrokers, brothers, settle down in a quiet seaside village in Norfolk. There are plans to build a large hotel on the cliffs, the brothers hold out on the deal, wanting more money but then one goes missing after his usual early morning swim and later his body is discovered. He is presumed to have drowned but his brother is unhappy with this and demands police protection. Enter Bobby Owen, the detective who made his debut in Punshon's previous novel, 'Information Received'. The crossword puzzle of the title is a novel way of providing the reader (and Bobby Owen) with clues to solve the mystery. It looks like a great idea and an enjoyable read but the story is not well executed and the identity of the murderer is obvious early on despite a few red herrings.

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### Gareth Evans says

Very much as expected. A decent, but far from stunning, period detective novel. Enjoyable, far-fetched (but then aren't most of the genre) and a couple of loose ends.

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### John says

Three and a half stars.

Reading these in chronological order appears to be the best way for me. I am having a bit of a "Punshonathon" while I am on holiday. So far I have enjoyed them all. This one is fairly complicated but enjoyable nevertheless.

I like Bobby Owen and I particularly like Superintendent Mitchell.

I think that if you like Sir Basil Thomson's Inspector Richardson then you will like Bobby Owen. They are of the same ilk.

Highly recommended and great value from Kindle.

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### S Dizzy says

Yet another mystery justifying to myself why I continue to binge read this series. It was riveting and, I like the characters and the intriguing murder mystery. Punshon writes well and keeps you interested. Too, I like that good old-fashioned police work and thinking outside the box gets the job done. Bobby Owen is growing

as a policeman with Superintendent Mitchell's encouragement and training.

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### **Christine Cody says**

Another captivating Bobby Owen mystery, but with an ending so shocking it feels Shakespearean in depth and passion. You can appreciate this series best by reading the books from the beginning; thus you can see how Bobby becomes more confident in his work. Punshon doesn't always let us know what Bobby is doing so when all is revealed in the end, we're surprised in so many ways. Fantastic.

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### **Damaskcat says**

This is an interesting mystery and I liked DC Bobby Owen who clearly takes great delight in his investigations. He is sent to stay with businessman George Winterton who fears for his life after the mysterious death of his brother, Archibald. Bobby is working undercover and is there at George's request. George is a crossword fanatic and he keeps dropping hints about how important the crossword he is working on at the moment will be in solving a mystery. Bobby feels that George is keeping information from him and worries that George will be murdered if he cannot find out what is going on.

The crossword is provided in the text along with the solution for readers to try for themselves. I found this an entertaining and intriguing mystery and it is well plotted with plenty of sinister and not so sinister characters and happenings. The book is well written as are most of the 1930s crime novels which are currently being republished. If you enjoy crime stories from this era then you will probably enjoy this one. It is part of a series featuring Bobby Owen but it can be read as a standalone novel.

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### **Andrea says**

These pre-war books are always very weird to read - the author has no idea what's coming, and so depicts the strange shifts to the world that are being caused by the build-up of tension, without the deliberate foreshadowing that you'd see used by a modern author.

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### **Alan says**

Rating between 3 & 3.5

Not a bad mystery as such although I wonder whether the guilty parties were slightly too obvious? Or perhaps I've read too many mystery novels.

As a fair play novel I thought it took 1 liberty in the final couple of chapters but otherwise was solvable if you concentrated.

A couple of thoughts did occur to me about the book/series. Firstly how is this case (and the previous one) assigned to such a relatively inexperienced officer and why? Secondly that ending did seem a tad rushed but the very nasty conclusion was a surprise and probably more do for the readers in the 1930's. Thirdly didn't

1930s authors really like Shakespeare's plays. And finally when the third business man arrives and describes his troubles in nazi Germany that must be one of the earliest descriptions of what was happening over there in mystery fiction since the story was relatively contemporaneous. And considering the casual anti-Semitic, sexist etc comments that appeared in all fiction of the time and of which readers now 'complain' it was an interesting and surprising new view.

So overall a good read and I will continue into the next in the series at some point. I do think this is a series to read in published order at least on the first read.

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### **C3wach says**

Good story. Got the next one.

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### **Berry says**

This may be the most golden age mystery of all and that's why I'm glad this was my first Punshon. It has everything a golden age mystery buff appreciates: a first rate mystery in a country house populated with a dysfunctional household complete with map, and to boot a crossword puzzle. It even features something golden age mystery buffs don't often have the chance to appreciate--namely, social commentary that has aged a lot better than some of Punshon's contemporaries.

Admittedly, I thought the resolution was anti-climatic until the ending which injects new life into the story. (No twist here, just quality storytelling.) That finale! What an image, what a scene. It begs for an adaptation. Calls to mind a certain Bond girl.

The writing is sharp and smart, there are no wasted pages, and the plot hangs together. If all of Punshon's characters are this fully psychologically realized, I'll be a happy reader. If the rest of his stories are just a bit more thrilling and, well, mysterious, I'll be a fan.

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### **Leila Mota says**

Another very good Bobby Owen mystery. What I'm really enjoying in this series is the ingenuity and the almost unexpected. Punshon deserves to be read.

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### **Millicent says**

I've been enjoying this series (and for those reading in order, as well as the Goodreads team, this book is actually #3, not #2), but this book seemed much more dated than the previous two. The solution and characterizations seem very creaky, and the pre-WWII plot is pretty outlandish. I'm a huge fan of Golden Age mysteries, so I'm used to seeing the attitudes and customs of an earlier time. This book isn't satisfying even taken on its own terms.

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**Vikas Datta says**

Sublime.. right that that powerful horrific end..

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**Julie says**

Policeman Bobby Owen is asked to go undercover to help guard a man afraid someone is after him after his twin brother dies. Bobby goes to live in the house with the man, his secretary, his nephews and his servants. It takes some doing to figure out if murder took place, what's really going on then solving the next murder that occurs.

Okay Classic Mystery. Moved a bit slow in places, but complicated enough, I guess. Not as good as some other classic mysteries.

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**Judy says**

A businessman on the Norfolk coast fears for his own life after his brother mysteriously drowns, and Bobby goes undercover as his house guest. That's the starting point for this third entry in the Bobby Owen mystery series, published in 1934.

As its title suggests, it has a strong puzzle element, typical of many Golden Age mysteries, and the book even includes a cryptic crossword for readers to try - though I must admit I skipped this exercise! My excuse that I was reading on Kindle, but I don't suppose I would have managed to solve the clues on paper either.

I quite enjoyed reading this, thanks to Punshon's very readable and often humorous writing style, and felt it was better than the second book, *Death Among The Sunbathers*, but still nowhere near as good as the first, *Information Received*.

As with the second book, the problem again is that the plot is ludicrously far-fetched and doesn't really hang together - I'm still wondering if there are a few loose ends, or if I just lost track of what was happening. Also the killer's identity is pretty obvious early on. There is a great set-piece ending, though, and the book does have many interesting elements woven in, including satire aimed at big business, and warnings over the situation in Germany under the Nazis.

I also enjoyed some of the characters, especially Bobby's chief, Inspector Mitchell, who appears quite a lot. I find him more interesting than Bobby himself, who is a bit bland thus far in the series - but then again he is still a young, curly-haired constable at this point.

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(view spoiler)