



Fire in the Blood

Ed James

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Book 3 in a series of Edinburgh-based police procedurals starring DC Scott Cullen which have been compared favourably with Ian Rankin, Mark Billingham, Christopher Brookmyre, Ed McBain, Elmore Leonard and Stuart MacBride.

Dunpender Distillery in East Lothian is steeped in the traditions of whisky-making. Approaching the distillery's centenary, a special edition is being readied for blending when something unexpected is found - one of the two barrels contains a male human body, battered and unrecognisable.

Detective Constable Scott Cullen, caught up in the maelstrom of managerial positioning surrounding the impending merger of Lothian & Borders into the Scottish Police Service, is sent out east again. Cullen is soon delving into the ancient history of the Crombie family, owners of the distillery, and investigating the disappearances of the owner's son, Iain Crombie, and an employee, Paddy Kavanagh, who both went missing around the time the whisky was distilled. Cullen is soon contending with the skeletons in the closets at the Distillery, DI Bain's desire for a quick collar and too many suspects with plausible motives, and finds himself hunting for a killer with fire in the blood.

Fire in the Blood Details

Date : Published January 27th 2013 (first published January 26th 2013)

ISBN :

Author : Ed James

Format : Kindle Edition

Genre : Mystery, Crime, Fiction

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From Reader Review Fire in the Blood for online ebook

Darlene says

Great book

This book kept me guessing until the very end. Excellent writing and plot. A definite must read. I highly recommend this book.

Jennifer Jennings says

Good read

Terry says

This is the third in the DC Scott Cullen series. I am enjoying them as it refreshing to see a mere DC getting into the story. The normal route of crime novels is to have DCI's running around interviewing everybody and solving every crime single handed. James's other alter ego copper DCI Fenchurch is a prime example so didn't enjoy those at all. Every other copper is just a stooge. I enjoy the other characters in these novels too with DCI Bain hated but at the same time enjoyed. Good stuff for crime buffs.

Nick Wilson says

Great novel, well written keeps the reader guessing for most of the novel as to who the guilty party is, giving little nudges so you keep thinking it could be each one in turn. Looking forward to the 4th novel

Sara Lamb says

I really enjoyed this book and found it difficult to put down. Ed James characters are becoming much more rounded and I feel I'm really getting to know them.

It was a brilliant, and unusual plot and although, I thought I'd guessed the perpetrator several times, I was completely wrong!!, which was good.

Ed James is really growing in talent, and Cullen, Bain etc would make great TV detectives too.

Segnalibro Blog says

(As posted on Segnalibro.co.uk) After reading Ghost in the Machine, I enjoyed Ed James's novel so much, I downloaded the rest of the books in the Scott Cullen series, ready to read. Fire in the Blood is the third

installment of this Lothian based detective series and it has been my favourite book of the series so far.

Detective Constable Scott Cullen is restless. He is irritated that he has not been made a Detective Sergeant yet despite feeling that he does all the work and he is also on the verge of moving in with his girlfriend DS Sharon McNeill following their flourishing relationship that has developed in the first two books, but seems to be stalling for some reason. As always, DI Bain is doing a lot of huffing, puffing, swearing and “strategising”, leaving Cullen frustrated with the way that the case that they are working on is progressing.

The case is an unusual one. A body is found in a barrel of whisky at an independent distillery on the day that they unveil a limited edition bottle of whisky for the distillery’s centenary. As all the victim’s teeth have been removed, the identification process is considerably delayed but the potential victim list is narrowed down to two people – a former employee or the owner’s son, who both disappeared within weeks of each other. Cullen and his colleagues are on the case under instruction from DI Bain, who is under pressure to produce results.

I think that the reason I enjoyed this book more than the first two is because I feel like I know Scott Cullen a little better three books in. That’s not to say that I didn’t enjoy *Ghost in the Machine* and *Devil in the Detail*, because I really did, but I am now in a position to share Cullen’s frustrations, now that the dynamic between him and Bain, as well as his other colleagues, has been explored.

James writes in a style that keeps the reader captivated. The victim and suspect list in this case is particularly short but I still wasn’t sure who the victim or the murderer was until the reveal. There are enough red herrings and diversions to stop the reader from guessing too early and Cullen’s readiness to take the initiative for better or worse takes the reader through twists and turns so that even when you think you’ve cracked it, you are hit with another bombshell to throw your suspicions out of the water.

My only negative criticism would be that I wasn’t overly keen on the couple of sex scenes in this book, mainly because there was no build up or afterglow, just a quick romp which is over and done with quite quickly. I think this was intentional on James’s part to show a potential issue in Cullen’s and McNeill’s relationship, but it seemed a little unnecessary. Their interactions are so few and far between and not especially loved-up, that this impression is already given. The sex scenes were just a little bit sordid and it really is no wonder that Cullen hasn’t moved in with McNeill yet. If that is all there is at this stage, then I don’t hold out much hope for their relationship if they move in together!

That said, this is the only criticism I have of this book. I couldn’t put it down, until it got necessary for me to have to go to sleep! I like Cullen enough to want to champion him and I am irritated by him just enough to want to give him a kick when he does something daft. As I mentioned in my reviews of *Ghost in the Machine* and *Devil in the Detail*, Cullen is flawed, which is a massive selling point for me with this series. Having read the first three books, I am sure that the others in this series will be just as enjoyable because James has created a set of characters with enough conflict between them but they know that they depend on each other to progress. He has a real talent for throwing in clever curveballs throughout to retain the reader’s interest to the end. I am really keen to get cracking with the next one in the series, but have a few other books to read first. However, you can be sure that the other Cullen novels will find their way onto Segnalibro.co.uk in the near future.

David says

The third in the Scott Cullen series has arrived and his fans will be delighted that this latest venture does not disappoint. The latest outing sees Scotty doing what he does best all the while being hampered by his boss DI Bain. There is also the sense that this is another chapter as part of a grander narrative arc for the ambitious Cullen. Is he getting anywhere? You will have to read Fire in the Blood to find out...and you will not be disappointed.

Brian Sanderson says

Third book in the Scott Cullen series I have read. Enjoyed it-it was an entertaining read. It did seem to get bogged down a bit in the relationship between Bain and Cullen. I can't imagine someone like Bain being able to survive in the modern police but then again I am no experience of working in the police. But the overall plot was good and kept you page turning to the last. Have already bought number 4 in the series.

Edward Beavers says

What a way to ruin good whiskey!!!

This was such a waste of whiskey, but, the story was better than anticipated a well done mystery. The more Scott Cullen I read the more I want to visit Scotland!! not for the murders but the scenery!!!

Mainer207 says

3.5 stars rounded up.

I have enjoyed the previous books in this series. I had a hard time getting interested in this one. The characters were all flat and not enjoyable. The story was decent and the narration was good. And I really like the author's Fenchurch series. This is what bumped my rating up by half a star.

I'm sorry the rest of this series is not available on Audible.

Ross Thompson says

Another cracking page-turner in the Cullen series, this time following the case of a body found in a barrel of whiskey.

For me, the mystery surrounding the case and the identity of the victim and the perpetrator were less hidden than in the previous books, I had an inkling of the plot from fairly early on. That being said, the journey to the conclusion was still an enjoyable one.

Main gripes are:

too much "thumping" going on, everyone "thumbed" this and "thumbed" that
the climax of the book was less of a revelation, more of the killer panicking and attacking the police when they really were not all that close to "cracking the case". Cullen is making a career for himself from being attacked by the killer on high profile murder cases who suddenly feels the need to reveal themselves and

save another 50 pages of detective work.

Part of this may have been as the story evolved from a short story into a novella and ultimately into a full novel.

Still, an enjoyable well written story.

Andy Angel says

Book 3 in the Scott Cullen mysteries and the series goes from strength to strength.

The story this time revolves around the finding of a body in a whiskey cask at the Dunpender Distillery. The body could be one of two people, a son of the distillery owner or a former worker - both have been missing since distillation in 1994.

Again, Cullen and his boss Brian Bain continue to rub each other up the wrong way and these interactions add to the general mixture of characters in the investigating team.

The story rattles along at a good pace and the ending really ratchets things up a notch.

Looking forward to more in the series

Karen McGuffie says

Loving these.

Alice says

Another great DC Scott Cullen book. There I go again - I clear my book list of one selection only to add the next one in the series!

John Roberts says

Another brilliant book by Ed. I just love the character of Scott Cullen! Look forward to the next instalment but in the mean time I have more Ed James books to read at some point!
