



Crowner's Quest

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On Christmas Eve in 1194, Sir John de Wolfe gratefully escapes a party being given by his wife to examine the body of a canon who has been found hanged. Suicide is suspected, but it is soon apparent that there is far more to this case than meets the eye. As always, his investigations are hampered by his brother-in-law, the sheriff Sir Richard de Revelle. But John must tread carefully, for it is not merely petty revenge that Richard has in mind this time—he is plotting treason and John is getting far too close to the truth for comfort.

Crowner's Quest Details

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Author : Bernard Knight

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Marla Sisley says

Crowners Quest

I've read many medieval mysteries over the years. It is one of my favorite genres. I have read two books from this series. This will be my last. Simply not well written. Neither was the first. Often felt like I was slogging my way through. Almost quit reading it several times but I hate to not finish a book once I start - to give it a chance to get better - it didn't!

P.D.R. Lindsay says

Bernard Knight writes a good Mediaeval mystery. He plots well, his characters are 3D and he knows his history. People who like to learn things when they read historicals will enjoy this series, but history and historical details are not thrust down the reader's throat, they just slide in as part of the story.

Crowner (coroner) Sir John de Wolfe is fiercely loyal to King Richard and very anti his brother, John. When he has to interrupt his Christmas Eve celebrations to see the body of a canon he soon finds himself dealing with more bodies and yet more treachery.

A thoroughly good read and most readers who enjoy hist-mysts will enjoy this. Sir John is a cheerful old reprobate and fun to read about.

Until I can have a private star rating for my own personal use - I do not agree with the Good Reads/Amazon methods of apply our readers' star ratings to an author's rating, which can affect sales - I will not add a star rating.

Deirdre says

The Crowner John mysteries pass the time enjoyably enough but Bernard Knight needs either to do his historical research more accurately (as a forensic pathologist, you'd think he'd be more respectful of accuracy) or he needs a better editor to advise him. In each of the three novels I've read so far there has been something that has grated in terms of anachronism. In Crowner's Quest, set around December 1194, he keeps referring to the New Year coming after Christmas when January 1 only became New Year in 1752, after England adopted the Gregorian calendar. In 1194, New Year would have fallen on March 25th. Some of the attitudes imputed to his leading character fail to ring true. In the first of the mysteries, The Sanctuary Seeker, his hero Crowner John, on witnessing a public hanging, muses whether England would in the future bring in a more civilised mode of justice. Such forward projection would have been completely alien then. Finally, after the first novel, there is simply too much backstory reiterated even at points in the story when the reader doesn't need the information. In novels which are sequenced, other authors manage this much more elegantly; in terms of modern crime novels one could mention Ian Rankin and in terms of the historical crime novel there is, of course, Lyndsey Davis. Such a disappointment. Knight's starting premise is a fertile

one for development and John de Wolfe, Nesta and Gwyn are interesting enough characters (even if Richard de Revelle is straight out of Sheriff of Nottingham mythology). I'll carry on reading because the books pass the time on a wet Sunday but they could have been so much better.

Autumn says

I enjoy the history. I find myself getting lost in 1195 but I found the battle between the crowner and his wife boring.

Ioana says

I liked this enough that I will probably read others in the series, but only because I love the setting (12th century England), and I've been on a historical mystery binge for a while. However, I would not recommend these to anyone (unless you ran out of Shardlake, Bartholomew, Cadfael, or Singleton books and your MUST satisfy your historical-English-mystery fix Now).

Some reasons why I don't like this series:

- * the writing is mediocre (and at times, it's inane and filled with modern cliches)
- * historical inaccuracies abound (my favorite so far is De Wolfe's musings about "lines at right angles" to each other...)
- * the majority of the characters are either detestable or pathetic
- * and the most important one, for me, is the amount of SCREAMING people do at each other; entire relationships consist primarily of arguments, characters seem to relish in the joy of beating someone or yelling at someone. It's an ugly model for relationships, and not a pleasant one to experience, even as a reader.

Jo says

In which Crowner John stops a rebellion. He also investigates the murders of a clergyman and a local noble. And it all ends up interlinking as usual. These books are such an easy read and an entertaining waste of time. Nice to see Knight's editor has finally figured out what they're doing so there are less typos and grammatical errors.

Sorcha says

Second Crowner story that I've read and to be honest, found it very "samey" to the previous book. Someone dies, Crowner has fallen out with his snobbish wife, who sides with her lying brother; Crowner and Brother in Law argue and shout at each other, then try and double cross each other; Crowner hangs out with his Welsh Mistress; Crowner hero-worships Richard the Lionheart; little bit of investigation; some people are arrested blah blah.[return][return]A few interesting moments, normally the small detail of how people live (washing once a week, bathing rarely) and eating (types of food and drink). But apart from that, did get a little bored with it all.

Ali says

Well I was just in the mood for some historical escapism , and this 12th century set mystery was just the thing so dived right into it.

The period detail and it's Devonshire setting is what I really like about these Crowner John novels, although the mystery element is good too. Times were certainly tough, and Kings Coroner John de Wolfe has a difficult job in unraveling the mystery of the death of a canon, alongside the plot of a rebellion he uncovers. His brother in law the slippery Richard de Revelle is as always up to his neck in the plotting, which sees de Wolfe in very real danger himself - more than once. If that isn't enough he manages to upset both his difficult sour faced wife Matilda, and his Welsh mistress Nesta.

A really good read, with plenty of historical detail, the author has an obviously huge knowledge of this period, and this makes for a convincing story.

kami says

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Dawn says

I spend my time while reading these books trying to decide if I like any of the characters or not. Most of the time I think they are all pretty much despicable but then there are odd moments when I feel sorry for them or sympathize with their plight and life. Even the most miserable of them. I find it's keeping things interesting.

BeesReads says

This is the third in the "Crowner John" series I haven't read the second yet as it wasn't in the shop - no matter they pretty well stand alone and the author makes sure you know some of the back history if you pick one up mid-series - a little repetitive.

In this medieval intrigue, a canon (cleric) is found hanging apparently suicide. However, our clever Crowner (Coroner) John and his trusty sidekick Gwyn, figure out that it isn't. It gets mixed up then with a search for buried treasure and a rebellion against the King (Richard the Lionheart) that nobles are planning.

Interestingly, you can quite see the point of the nobles - John is a fervant supporter of the King - the King is permanently fighting wars in France and raising taxes against the British people to fund them, and never comes to Britain. So, as I say, interesting that while the nobles planning rebellion have a good point, they are definitely portrayed as the bad guys. John's woman troubles with his wife, mistress and others lead his opponents to find a way to get him into serious trouble. Anyway, it all rides to a conclusion.

The standard of writing isn't great to be frank and the repetitive nature of the 'reminders' was a little tedious. Nonetheless it was a good 'bed book' - not over demanding, lightweight murder mystery and with interesting historical snippets in it. Suitable to fall asleep with. I will get more in this series because I like a reasonable selection of going to sleep books to balance the more heavyweight day time reading

Kevin J. says

not enough ducks

Wayne Farmer says

Another enjoyable Crowner John mystery. This time the murders are almost secondary to the rebellion plot (although they are a small part of that plot). I found myself far more interested in the growing seeds of rebellion against Richard the Lionheart and found it fascinating to find out about the tensions in England at that time. It was also interesting to see another side to John's relationship with his wife and having it take a surprising turn towards the end of the book. As always there are lots of little details about how people lived their everyday lives and these give a certain realness to the characters. I'm holidaying in Devon this year and looking forward to seeing the locations mentioned in these novels - hopefully that will bring even more life to these stories.

Amy Bradley says

The third of the Crowner John novels. Treachery and treason are afoot once more in Devon, and Sir John de Wolfe investigates with the help of his officer Gwynn and scribe Thomas.

A canon is found dead in his house on cathedral grounds, and is found to be murder most foul, despite initially seeming to be a suicide. Later, a local manor lord is murdered, and the plot twists as rebels seek to discredit the coroner.

Another excellent read, more devious than the previous, but I very much enjoyed it.

henrys-axe says

Another great medieval tale involving the crowner John de Wolfe and his two ever-faithful aides - Gwyn of Polruan and defrocked priest Thomas de Payne. This third novel in the series has the relentless trio pursuing the murder of an aged canon, old Saxon treasure and, of course, the sniveling, manipulative sheriff, Richard de Revelle. Baronial dissatisfaction is also an integral part of the plot as distaste for the rule of Richard the Lionheart continues to plague the country.
