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When teenager Nick Buckingham tumbles from the fifth floor of an apartment block, Detective Sergeant Solomon Gray answers the call with a sick feeling in his stomach. The victim was just a kid, sixteen years old. And the exact age the detective's son, Tom, would've been, had he not gone missing at a funfair ten years ago. Each case involving children haunts Gray with the reminder that his son may still be out there - or worse, dead. The seemingly open and shut case of suicide twists into a darker discovery. Buckingham and Gray have never met, so why is Gray's number on the dead teenager's mobile phone?

With his boss, Detective Inspector Yvonne Hamson, Gray begins to unravel a murky world of abuse, lies, and corruption. An investigator from the Met is called in to assist, setting the local police on edge. And when the body of Reverend David Hill is found shot to death in the vestry of Gray's old church, Gray wonders how far the depravity stretches and who might be next. Nothing seems connected, and yet there is one common thread: Detective Sergeant Solomon Gray, himself. As the bodies pile up, Gray must face his own demons. Crippled by loss but determined to find the truth, Gray takes the first step on the long road of redemption.

Set in the once grand town of Margate in the south of England, the now broken and depressed seaside resort becomes its own character in this dark detective thriller. Dig Two Graves is the first book in a series featuring Detective Sergeant Solomon Gray.

Dig Two Graves Details

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Author : Keith Nixon

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From Reader Review Dig Two Graves for online ebook

Melanie Lewis says

This was my first Keith Nixon book but it certainly won't be my last. How I took poor, beleaguered DS Solomon Gray to my heart. How much heartbreak can one man take without giving up? Luckily for the residents of Margate, Solomon has dedicated what remains of his life to his work and gives his all to catching criminals. This is a particularly difficult case for Solomon, and he hides his emotions behind booze and cigarettes. Just as you think there is a flicker of hope for the poor policeman, Mr Nixon throws a spanner in the works. Seemingly random murders get solved but is there any possibility of happiness for Solomon Gray? No spoilers here but I definitely need to listen to book 2. I am thrilled to highly recommend this book and look forward to a new series.

Linda Strong says

It all starts when a teenage boy apparently falls from the balcony of an apartment. Was this an accident? murder? suicide? He's only 16 years old. And although Gray does not know this young man, Gray's phone number is on his phone.

This is not the only death that somehow involves Solomon. His parish priest is found shot to death in his church. And when Solomon has a one-night-stand, the woman in question is also found shot to death the next morning. Is Solomon a killer? Or a victim?

Solomon is a very vivid character. He is a man who has suffered immensely with losses in his life. His then 5-year-old son was abducted 10 years ago. He has never been seen since. But there's not a day goes by that Solomon pours over police reports and newspaper accountings looking for something .. anything ... that might be a lead. Five years after that his wife took an intentional overdose of medications, putting an end to her suffering. Solomon has a daughter, but she chose to live with her grandparents and he hasn't seen her since his wife died.

And yet he is a very strong man ... cranky at times, depressed at times, but still he recognizes his first job is justice for the victims he encounters in his job. Not everyone likes him, but he doesn't seem to care.

The book bounces back and forth between what he's encountering today and memories of when his son disappeared. I couldn't put this book down. As a parent, I had so much empathy for what he had gone through. As a member of a law enforcement family, I could understand why his job means so much ... it's all he has left.

Many thanks to the author / Bastei Entertainment / Netgalley for the advance digital copy of this crime thriller. Opinions expressed here are unbiased and entirely my own.

Monica Mac says

Solomon Gray is a troubled man who is haunted by the disappearance of his son, 10 years earlier. His life kind of unravelled after that and he is going through the motions of his life and his career and still looking for his son everywhere he goes.

This is a solid enough book, part police procedural, part psychological profile of Sol, who comes off looking like a man who others should really avoid, in work and in personal situations. There is a lot going on in his workplace, and he doesn't know who to trust, which doesn't help his position either.

All in all, I think this book had promise but it was a hard slog to read it and it was unrelentingly grim. Sol was so depressed and fed up (btw, you can't just take anti-depressants willy nilly, as described in the book), that it tainted everything he touched. I would absolutely hate to work with someone like him, and I found him pretty unpleasant. Yes, we all have things that we need to overcome in our lives but do we have to make everyone else's lives a misery as well? I couldn't summon up any liking for this character at all. A little bit of light would have been nice in this book actually, something positive, anything, or even a quirky character trait.

I am sorry, but it is a 3 for me because it has potential and the writing is solid. Unfortunately, by the time the book ended I didn't even really care that there might be a glimmer of hope for Sol somewhere on the horizon.

Gordon Brown says

Dig Two Graves introduces us to Detective Sergeant Solomon Gray, a man that is struggling with the weight of the past, a man forced to confront his demons when the body of sixteen year old boy is discovered - an apparent suicide.

The novel examines the pain that Solomon lives with every day. Haunted by his role when his son vanished a decade earlier - the novel peels back Solomon's life through a series of flashbacks and an increasing body count. It reveals his struggles with religion, the guilt of the role that he played in his son's disappearance, his depression and, ultimately his loneliness.

His often-complicated relationship with his fellow officers, compounded by his tendency to hide the truth leads to an accelerating self-destructive spiral.

As he seeks solace and answers he is forced to pick through the gruesome wreckage of multiple murders, before suffering the ultimate fear and humiliation of becoming a suspect in some of the deaths.

Solomon Gray is a damaged police detective who knows he's in a job that will never stop opening old wounds, a job that will, every single day, require him to fight hard to keep his head above water.

Dig Two Graves will keep you guessing to the end, while wondering if Solomon can identify the murderers and their motivations under such an intense personal onslaught.

Elaine Tomasso says

I would like to thank Netgalley and Bastei Entertainment for an advance copy of Dig Two Graves, the debut

novel in a projected series featuring DS Solomon Grey of Margate police.

DS Solomon Grey is haunted by the disappearance of his six year old son ten years ago so when a 16 year old youth falls from a balcony he is motivated to find out what happened but as the body count rises he finds himself in too deep.

Dig Two Graves is an interesting read as it is more a character study of Sol than a police procedural and the crime definitely takes second place to Sol's experiences. The hint is in the title, taken from the Chinese proverb "when seeking revenge first dig two graves". In this case it's not Sol seeking revenge but he is digging his own grave with his self destructive behaviour and attitudes.

I was a bit disappointed in this novel as I expected it to be a police procedural and it clearly isn't. The crime investigation is rather perfunctory and wrapped up in the same manner at the end. It is all about Sol and as he's a distinctly unpleasant individual it's a bit of a dreary read. He hasn't come to terms with Tom's disappearance and his guilt over it so he is now a curmudgeonly, self pitying, self destructive individual with an obsessive need to find his son. Some of it is understandable as the reader slowly finds out in flashback chapters what happened 10 years ago but the sympathy soon wears off when he makes no effort to help himself.

I would like to think that the glimmer of hope offered at the end of Dig Two Graves will make the sequel a more interesting read for me.

Dig Two Graves is a solid novel, just not to my taste.

Hannelore Cheney says

Thank you Netgalley, Bastei Entertainment and Keith Nixon for this eARC.

10 Years ago, DSI Salomon Gray took his 6-year old son, Ton, to the funfair for his birthday...only to lose him.

5 Years later, his wife committed suicide. The past decade Gray has been eaten up by unbearable grief and guilt and when he is called to the scene of the suspected suicide of a 16-year old teenager, the age Tom would be now, it again rips open the old wound.

He's a lonely, driven man who has obsessively tried to solve the mystery of Tom's disappearance.

At times I got a little impatient with Gray, but overall I felt a deep empathy.

After 3 subsequent murders, he ends up as a suspect, but help comes from a surprising direction and we are left with a feeling of optimism as to Gray's future emotional life. He's not as alone as he thought, the likeable DI Yvonne Hamson and DCI Carslake have his back.

Unusually, I didn't guess the murderer(s) and I highly recommend this well-written thriller. Looking forward to no. 2 in the series!

Linda Acaster says

In the first of a new Crime series, Keith Nixon moves away from his romping Konstantin thrillers and his action Caradoc historicals to give a poignant and heart-wrenching portrayal of a man in torment trying to keep it together while reaching inexorably for self-destruct.

Ten years ago, as a stressed police officer just off a long shift, he took his six year old to the local fair as a promised birthday treat – and lost him for all time. His guilt is shared by his fellow officers who failed to find a trace of the boy, and just as a bruised fruit decays and contaminates those around it, none of his colleagues have escaped unscarred. Each uses his or her own defence mechanism, from snide remarks to cold professionalism, all mostly unrecognised by Gray who rigidly walks the police's disciplinary line like a drunk of old. His single guiding star is the belief that staying within the force and being able to sift information, one day he'll find a lead to his son's whereabouts.

Then comes the call, and echoes begin to resound. A teen who would now be the age of his son has committed suicide. But did he jump? Did he fall? Was he pushed? Most of all, why is Gray in a triangle with the dead teen and a too-helpful officer from London's Met?

Characterisations are sharply etched and the reader both empathises and feels great sympathy, not only for Gray in his argumentative desolation, but for those around him, be they his work colleagues or friends and acquaintances from before he lost his Faith and his family. When Tanya the cafe owner shows him a little care the reaction is marked and carries like a lightning strike through to the reader. Yet, even as Gray recognises it as a tentative route to salvation, the author's use of a parallel time-line brings all, even Gray, into a new and disturbing light.

This stark portrayal of a man fighting himself is an engrossing read conveyed by a deft hand. If you are more interested in the Crime than the manifestations of guilt and retribution there are plenty of clues to ruminate over. It leaves 'Dig Two Graves' as a solid foundation for an interesting series. Highly recommended.

Mark Wilson says

Tight plot? Check. Classic, damaged detective? Check. Punchy sentence structure? Check. Healthy dose of black humour and cynicism? Check.

Keith's crime writer's writer. A classic of his species.

His latest offering is a predictable leap forward in his development. Guided by Al Guthrie, Keith has fine tuned his finely-tuned skill set and story craft, producing his most accessible, tightly-edited and genre-perfect book of his catalogue to date.

Keith's the best. Guthrie's the best. Dig Two Graves is the best.

Be the best, read the best.

Kaz says

Dig Two Graves is the first book in a new series, D S Solomon Gray is a man with a ten ton weight on his shoulders, riddled with guilt over his young son who went missing whilst in his care, now ten years later the police are no closer to knowing the truth. A family torn apart from grief, and D S Gray is not in a good place emotionally or physically. The past comes back to haunt him when the body of a young teenager is found, all pointers indicate he committed suicide, but why is Grays number found on the dead boys phone?. Keith Dixon has written a great storyline for what promises to be an intriguing new character in this series , though I must say, at times I wanted to shout at Gray to get his act together!, it's a dark complex procedural with enough corruption and interesting characters that kept me wanting to find know more, a very well paced ,

well thought out plot line. Looking forward to learning more about Solomon Gray in the next instalment of the series. Highly recommended.

Sarah Ramsden says

Omg loved this book, I didn't want to put it down but kinda needed sleep and to work lol.

The flashback scenes really helped to understand why Solomon Grey is the way he is and what keeps driving him on and why he keeps digging in a suspected suicide

Lots of twists and I can't wait for book #2

Col says

Synopsis/blurb.....

Was it suicide ... or murder?

When teenager Nick Buckingham tumbles from the fifth floor of an apartment block, Detective Sergeant Solomon Gray answers the call with a sick feeling in his stomach. The victim was just a kid, sixteen years old. And the exact age the detective's son, Tom, would've been, had he not gone missing at a funfair ten years ago. Each case involving children haunts Gray with the reminder that his son may still be out there - or worse, dead. The seemingly open and shut case of suicide twists into a darker discovery. Buckingham and Gray have never met, so why is Gray's number on the dead teenager's mobile phone?

With his boss, Detective Inspector Yvonne Hamson, Gray begins to unravel a murky world of abuse, lies, and corruption. An investigator from the Met is called in to assist, setting the local police on edge. And when the body of Reverend David Hill is found shot to death in the vestry of Gray's old church, Gray wonders how far the depravity stretches and who might be next. Nothing seems connected, and yet there is one common thread: Detective Sergeant Solomon Gray, himself. As the bodies pile up, Gray must face his own demons. Crippled by loss but determined to find the truth, Gray takes the first step on the long road of redemption.

Set in the once grand town of Margate in the south of England, the now broken and depressed seaside resort becomes its own character in this dark detective thriller. Dig Two Graves is the first book in a series featuring Detective Sergeant Solomon Gray. The crime series is perfect for fans of Ian Rankin, Stuart MacBride, and Peter James.

"Keith Nixon does for Margate what Peter James did for Brighton ... As dark and brooding as the wind-lashed shores of the North Sea, and with its disturbing echoes of the Elm Guest House scandal and suggestions of deep-seated institutional corruption, Dig Two Graves is a superb addition to the rich Brit Crime scene."

- Tim Baker, CWA shortlisted author of Fever City

My take....

An interesting series opener with Nixon's Solomon Gray. Gray has issues. The disappearance of his son, Tom ten years ago still haunts him. He holds himself accountable for Tom's disappearance. The aftermath - the decline of his marriage, the suicide of his wife and his ongoing separation from his surviving daughter - are all matters of ongoing regret. He still harbours hopes of finding his son alive and every spare minute is spent on reviewing the case file or exploring new possibilities however unlikely or tenuous. It's fair to say a huge shadow blights Gray's life and his sorrow resonates throughout the book.

The case in hand - a sixteen year old boy going over a fifth floor balcony, suicide or something else? This is a police procedural - so something else is the order of the day.

I liked this one, I enjoyed the dynamics of the police force involved in and around Gray. His direct boss is Yvonne Hamson. Her boss Carslake is an old friend of Gray's and the personal connection sometimes irritates her as Gray can on occasion try and circumvent the chain of command. The other member of the team is Michael Fowler. We also have interaction and a sympathetic relationship with the pathologist, Ben Clough .

Other deaths follow and there is also the involvement of a Met Officer in the original case. The dead sixteen year old having had some London links.

The setting is Margate, a Kent seaside resort that has definitely seen better days. That I visited the town itself a year or two ago, lent a certain familiarity to the backdrop. Definitely somewhere I want to return to, though probably only on the written page.

Dig Two Graves is short for a police procedural - approximately 230 pages long - though the novel never feels rushed. Nixon's just gets to where he wants to take the reader without any undue fuss. That said the relationships and characters of the main players are developed and interesting. There is a resolution to the initial tragedy and the subsequent deaths, but there is definitely some unfinished business for Solomon Gray.

4 from 5

Keith Nixon has his website here.

<http://www.keithnixon.co.uk/>

Burn the Evidence is the second in the Solomon Gray series and was read not long after this one.

Nixon also has a couple of other series under his belt - the Konstantin Files and a series with Caradoc, set in Ancient Britain. Some of each have been previously enjoyed.

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Format - Kindle

<https://col2910.blogspot.co.uk/2018/0...>

Rob Johnson says

Excellent beginning to a brand new series.

Having read and thoroughly enjoyed all of Keith Nixon's crime novels to date, 'Dig Two Graves' has got to be his best yet. The author clearly has a knack for creating unusual and intriguing characters, and his latest protagonist, Detective Sergeant Solomon Gray, is no exception. For a character who, on the surface at least, doesn't come across as particularly likeable, Nixon has managed to make him incredibly sympathetic and multi-dimensional.

Skilfully blending the tragic events of DS Gray's past with a tightly plotted murder investigation in the present, this is no ordinary police procedural or whodunit. It's certainly a page turner with many a twist and turn along the way, but it's also a book of great depth with some fascinating insights into the protagonist's tortured psyche.

An excellent beginning to a brand new series. Looking forward to the next one.

Dave says

Absolutely terrific police procedural. A great reminder that the best crime fiction stories are really first and foremost about people and what they do and what they become when faced with the most nerve-wracking and horrible circumstances. Here, we have a British policeman whose life has been torn asunder more than anyone who could possibly bear and who could be described as a walking deadman, that is, dead inside. And yet he soldiers on, barely permitting himself to think or feel. There's a few mysteries at the heart of this story, but the magic of the story is in the realistic characters that Nixon creates. This was a truly unexpected treat, far superior to most of the police procedurals you might pick up.

Susan Angela Wallace says

Dig two graves by keith Nixon.

3 murders are they connected? A boy gone missing. Soloman is in turmoil. His boy is missing. His wife committed suicide. His daughter doesn't want to know him. Will he find the murderer? What about his son? Absolutely fantastic read. Loved the story and the characters. I do hope there is more to come. This is a must read and I would highly recommend this book. 5*.

Katie says

Dig Two Graves by Keith Nixon was a bit different to what I was expecting, which was a good thing! Solomon Gray is struggling with still coming to terms with his son going missing 10 years ago. So when he is called to a crime scene where a 16yr old boy has fallen to his death (the same age his son would be now) he gets pulled in more than he would have previously.

I enjoyed the plot, it had enough going on to keep me interested and I liked the look back at what happened 10 years ago to Gray's son. However I would have liked to read more about his son's disappearance, I seemed to enjoy that part more.

Gray is not really a likeable man, he doesn't listen to anyone and does his own thing however at times I did feel sorry for him. He has suffered heartbreak and pain more times than I could count.

There's more twists and turns than I was expecting and some that I didn't expect at all. It's much more than your average police crime read, definitely a series to watch out for!

The setting of Margate was different, I vaguely recall visiting Margate years ago but I know in time it has suffered from neglect and people going elsewhere for holidays. Keith has written it well, it really did feel dark and depressing being there and I couldn't imagine going to visit now let alone live.

I will look forward to more books in this series, I'm interested to know how Gray will turn out in later books.
