



## **Devil's Kitchen: An Inspector Drake Prequel Novella**

*Stephen Puleston*

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A tragic accident?

When two bodies are found sprawled at the bottom of the Devil's Kitchen in the mountains of Snowdonia, it's believed the man found dead killed his wife and then committed a suicide. But something doesn't feel right to DI Ian Drake and his gut instinct has never let him down before.

Or murder on a mountain?

Drake suspects at least one of the deaths could be suspicious, but who would kill such an ordinary couple and why? This might be Drake's first murder inquiry, but his years as a detective have taught him one thing - every murder has a motive, and every killer leaves a trace.

## Devil's Kitchen: An Inspector Drake Prequel Novella Details

Date : Published April 28th 2016

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Author : Stephen Puleston

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## **From Reader Review Devil's Kitchen: An Inspector Drake Prequel Novella for online ebook**

### **Donna Maguire says**

<https://donnasbookblog.wordpress.com/...>

We go on holiday to North Wales on a regular basis and I do love reading a book set in a location known to me so when I saw that this novella was free and set where we go in Snowdonia I knew I had to read it!

I have read the first book in this series (Brass in Pocket) and gave that book 5 stars and this is the prequel novella - technically book 0.5 so I was interested to see how Drake dealt with his first murder case and how the relationship started with his team. This was a really quick read that took me less than two hours. The plot is good and it is easy to read - I enjoyed it - 4 stars from me! Looking forward to reading the rest of the series!

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### **Terry (TBC) says**

#### **Audiobook Review**

A great full packed story. A cop who wants to be thorough and do a good job. Determined to sort this case out. Superiors who would make do. But guess what, this is getting sorted.

Enjoyed the pace and narration. Story was great. Jam packed in a short time.

One to listen to

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### **Linda Strong says**

This short novella takes the reader back to Inspector Drakes's very first investigation. DI Ian Drake is called when two bodies are found at the bottom of a mountain.

At first glance, it looks like a man stabbed his wife and then jumped to his own death. But Drake has a feeling there is more to the story. Possibly someone else stabbed the wife and threw the husband over the cliff.

Drake wants this investigation to go well, to show that he can do the job and do it well. He and his partner, DS Caren Waits go to great lengths in interviewing possible witnesses, friends and family.

The couple, from all accounts, seemed like any normal married couple. So who would want them dead?

Drake seems to suffer from Obsessive-compulsive personality disorder (OCPD) ..he displays a pattern of concern with orderliness, perfectionism. excessive attention to details. And when his partner talks with her mouth full, it's almost more than he can bear. He and his wife are having problems ... mainly because he can't turn his mind off this case... and he's gone a lot.

I actually didn't learn much about Waits. She is somewhat at odds with Drake, but she does understand that he is the boss and what he says, goes.

Although a 70-page novella, there's plenty of action, plenty of suspense packed into these pages. I'm sure I'll be following this series.

Many thanks to the author who provided a digital ARC for my reading pleasure.

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## Fictionophile says

A double murder in the Snowdonia Mountains. A police procedural, prequel novella that introduces a freshly promoted Detective Inspector. A stunning cover. All of these things attracted me to this book.

Ian Drake has only been a DI for a month. He is married and the father of two young daughters. His wife, Sian, doesn't understand the demands of his new position and is jealous of his time spent away from her and their two daughters.

His second in command, DS Caren Waits, couldn't be more different to Drake, in work ethic, mannerisms, and personal habits. He is fastidious to the point of OCD, she is rather slovenly.

*"The glorious scenery of North Wales couldn't hide the darker side of humanity".*

Near the end of September, two bodies have been found at one end of Cwm Idwal in the Snowdonia mountains. One obviously a murder (*kitchen knife protruding from her chest*), the other subject to question. The victims are husband and wife, Jack and Denise Trainor. Everyone, including Drake's boss, think that this case has all the hallmarks of a crime of passion. *Husband kills wife, then filled with remorse, jumps to his own death.*

Drake suspects this is oversimplifying, and thinks there may be more to this crime than is immediately apparent.

DI Drake is normally my type of copper. He cares about his job, he is a bit quirky, and he is the exact opposite type of personality to his sergeant. However... I didn't warm to him at all. I cannot explain it...

I loved the setting, how could you not? The mystery plot was well executed, but the overall mix left me quite underwhelmed. I wonder if it was in part to sentences such as these?

*"The Trainors seemed well read and educated so it puzzled Drake why anyone would have wanted to kill them."*

Seriously? I don't see the connection.

Though many factors of this series appeals to me, I have decided that I will very likely **not** be following it any further. Others may overlook some of the things that I found jarring, and those people will likely have found a new favorite author. This is just a short read, so give it a try and see for yourself if you feel this is a series worth pursuing.

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## **Sandra Leivesley says**

Although this is a short novella Stephen Puleston has packed lots of action into this story. Ian Drake is a newly promoted DI in charge of his first case as SIO when two bodies are found. We learn that Drake is conscientious almost to the point of being OCD. His sidekick, DS Caren Waits, is his opposite - a bit of a slob. The case looks initially like a murder/suicide but Drake isn't convinced.

The story is set in Snowdonia, an area I know from family holidays, and I like books set in familiar locations, which were described well.

I listened to this in one sitting, and although short the story draws you in and there were several twists to keep you guessing. I haven't read anything by Stephen Puleston before but I will definitely try one of the full length Drake novels.

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## **Rosemary says**

### **Devil's Kitchen - a review by Rosemary Kenny**

This brilliant DI Drake novel by genius Stephen Puleston proves he's the modern successor to Colin Dexter and definitely worthy of the crown of Master of Detective Murder Mysteries.

Devil's Kitchen is a peculiar natural rock formation on Cadet Ideal Mountain and Drake and Ceren, his Detective Sergeant learn of the discovery of two bodies there.

Initially the case - Drake's first as SIO - seems straightforward... John Trainor or murdered his wife then threw himself to his death off the rock face in a fit of remorse...or is it really that simple?

Who is the elusive person in the red walking jacket?

Why is John Scott a suspect?

What information does Ceren find at the Trainors' cottage?

Where do they find Denise Trainor's sister - and what does she reveal to Drake and Ceren?

As the clues and red herrings come thick and fast you'll be drawn into the wild mountain beauty and the contrast with the ugliness of jealousy and murder in this sensational novel and yearn for more from the mighty pen of Stephen Puleston. I loved this fast-paced exciting adventure and can't wait to get the next - you'll love it too - guaranteed!

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## **Maggie Kiely says**

I was given a free code for this on Audible in return for an honest review.

This is my first time with this author and this is a novella as an introduction to the series of DI Ian Drake. The narrative by Richard Elfyn was clear and I warmed to the voice taking me through the story.

There is a double death in the Snowdonia Mountains. Newly appointed DI Drake is suspicious but is under pressure to wrap it up. His working partner is Caren Waits.

Drake is punctual, obsessive about his tidiness and a stickler for detail. Waits is the opposite arriving late and

appears less precise. This has the great potential to fuel irritation between them as the series progresses. I didn't take much to Drake's wife Sian. She appears to view Drake as her child rather than her partner from the way she was speaking to him. It will be interesting to see if they stay together as the books progress. I liked how the investigation gained momentum and how Drake approached it. He came across as very dedicated and determined to get to the truth and do justice for the dead. I really enjoyed this and would recommend it to anyone looking for a new detective murder series. I would definitely read more books in the series but hopefully they will be produced on Audible as I prefer to listen.

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### **Richard says**

A good use of a novella to re-inforce this excellent series; promote the existing books available and take fans back to the beginning to Ian Drake's first case as a detective inspector.

DI Drake is borderline OCD. He is meticulous in his dress, personal cleanliness and order. A lack of this qualities in others annoy him to the point of mild stress and distraction.

A family man his worklife balance is thrown out of kilter when he is unable to pass on a case of misadventure to the coroner without full scrutiny and pursuit of all available leads. With pressure from above and at home we see Drake for who he is and why he is the man and detective he has become.

I loved the location and scene of crime, high in the Snowdonia. The careful descriptions of the 'murder' scene and the logistic difficulties this presented the investigation, beyond the lack of CCTV. The story relies on old fashioned police work, methodical and unrelenting pursuit of the truth.

I liked the number of sub-plots and the links that were missed and made indirectly that ensured finally the truth is revealed. It challenges our assumptions and how sometimes things can be overlooked.

This is a good short story that shows this a series open to all from fans of police procedurals to readers who adore lateral thinking detectives who use logic to finally join the dots. In this case there is limited DNA and evidence to identify or prove what happened and who was involved other than a police officer's hunch and determination to weigh up the evidence.

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### **LJ (On The Shelf Reviews) says**

The story opens with Ian Drake, newly promoted to Detective Inspector and he's keen to prove himself when the call comes in about two bodies being found in the Cwn Idwal valley in the middle of Snowdonia, otherwise known as the Devil's Kitchen.

It looks like a simple murder suicide but Drake is unsure. With the help of DS Caren Waits he wants to find out what really happened.

This is a good short story, it's only eleven chapters long, and a nice introduction to the characters of DI Drake and DS Waits.

DI Drake seems a little OCD and serious which nicely complements DS Waits who's a bit more laid back and messy.

I haven't read many stories set in Wales, especially crime fiction and I'm interested in seeing where this series is headed.

I read it in one sitting and I think it's ideal for a commute or if you've got a bit of spare time.

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## **Joyce says**

4 stars

Perhaps if I hadn't read all of Stephen Puleston's later novels, I would have liked this one better. It was a fine little story, but Drake's ADHD and other personality quirks I already knew about. Perhaps it is something about going backwards.

A husband and wife fall (?) off a cliff. When DI Drake and his partner DS Caren get to the site, they see that the woman was stabbed. Was this a murder – suicide? Did someone kill them both?

The reader follows the investigation as Drake and Caren sort out who might want to stab the wife. They focus on her relationships and less so on the husband's. The man didn't leave a suicide note and he was known to have kept a journal, so why didn't he write out a note if he committed suicide? This little fact bothers Drake – a lot.

Drake and Caren ferret out the truth behind the incident.

I am very much looking forward to the next DI Ian Drake novel.

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## **Books n All Jill Burkinshaw says**

My rating 5 out of 5 stars

This is a novella prequel to the Inspector Drake series. Personally, I love the idea of having a short book to introduce the characters to a series and this one is free which is a bonus.

As they attend the crime scene it appears this is a crime of passion with the husband murdering his wife and then committing suicide. Drake, however, is convinced that all is not as it seems and has a struggle to convince his boss to allow him to follow his gut instinct. There are many twists and turns to the story which moves along at a reasonably fast pace. It is an unusual story with relationships, deceit and jealousy playing a part. The ending is one the reader won't expect.

Drake has just been promoted to Detective Inspector and is still finding his feet when 2 bodies are found at the bottom of a cliff. He is a very particular character and likes everything clean and tidy and this comes across in his work as he likes everything neatly tied up with no loose ends. He has a difficult relationship with his work partner, Caren as they are totally different personalities. Caren is dedicated to her work but, compared to Drake, she is a little slovenly and disorganised. However, Drake is determined to create a good working relationship. He also has a slightly difficult home life as his wife struggles with the anti-social hours that detectives work.

The series is set in the beautiful countryside of Wales and Stephen makes an excellent job of ensuring the reader can visualise the setting and scenery. This is a great novella and I will be reading the rest of this series.

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## Col says

Synopsis/blurb....

A tragic accident?

When two bodies are found sprawled at the bottom of the Devil's Kitchen in the mountains of Snowdonia, it's believed the man found dead killed his wife and then committed a suicide. But something doesn't feel right to DI Ian Drake and his gut instinct has never let him down before.

Or murder on a mountain?

Drake suspects at least one of the deaths could be suspicious, but who would kill such an ordinary couple and why? This might be Drake's first murder inquiry, but his years as a detective have taught him one thing - every murder has a motive, and every killer leaves a trace.

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My take.....

An Amazon FREEBIE and a 70 page introduction to Stephen Puleston's DI Ian Drake character. Puleston has written three full length novels featuring this detective – the first of which Brass in Pocket was also hoovered up when it was an Amazon FREEBIE.

We have a double death in the Snowdon Mountains, which to first appearances seems to be a bit of domestic strife. The husband stabs the wife then kills himself by throwing himself to his death. Its Drake's first major case and quickly he's under pressure from his super to wrap things up, pass it to the coroner and stop wasting time.

Drake isn't in such a rush and wants to establish beyond all reasonable doubt that everything is as it seems. Obviously it isn't as otherwise we wouldn't have a particularly interesting narrative. Drake and his investigative partner Caren Waits interview witnesses on the mountain, work colleagues, family (eventually) and fellow members of a ramblers club, which in addition to the husband's diary and his suspicion of her conducting an affair, eventually shed a bit of light on who did what and why. The investigation was quite thoughtful and methodical.

Puleston gives Drake a few mannerisms or traits which add flesh to the bones of the character. He's obsessively neat and tidy with shoes spit-polished to within an inch of their life – though he probably didn't spit. He's a bit anal. By contrast, Waits has to be his polar opposite – she turns up late, eats her food with her mouth open, and is a lot less fastidious about her appearance. All irritants to Drake. We also have the potential for some domestic strife in future books. Drake's wife Sian is resentful of his dedication to his job and the disruption it causes to their family life, the couple having two children. I can't see this marriage lasting three more books, if I'm honest.

Verdict – enjoyable enough. I quite liked the progress of the investigation and Drake's approach, though I wasn't totally sold on the characters. Maybe I read it grumpy, but I kind of felt that the author was trying a bit too hard to make the main character memorable. All I could think though was – he's Adrian Monk's annoying Welsh cousin, assuming he has one. Conversely though – what's the alternative? A stick figure for a detective with no back-story or life outside the job.

Maybe Brass in Pocket will have me warming to both Drake and the author, though I'm not rushing towards

it for now.

3 from 5

Stephen Puleston has his website here.

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

Read in October, 2016

Amazon FREE download

<http://col2910.blogspot.co.uk/2016/10...>

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## **Simon says**

I am aware this series started a few years ago and this introduction novella came a couple of years later. For me, it's a whole new start for this detective.

The story: I really enjoyed this police procedural, the dogged determination of Inspector Drake with his neatness OCD. After the case was concluded for his superiors he takes it upon himself to ferret out the real killer, and amidst many red-herrings, he gets his man. None of the plot seemed contrived and he got his man by sheer doggedness and following the clues and his hunches/ experience rather than blind luck.

This is a literary crime drama too, with lovely prose describing the area of Devil's Kitchen and the town. I was entranced as much by this as the following of the crime.

The audio: This was excellent. The narrator was so natural and inflexion perfect. Accents were good, and the fast pace of the story came through in the narration too without being rushed.

All in all a great story and I'd definitely recommend if you're after a new crime series. I will be reading the rest.

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## **DubaiReader says**

Murder in the mountains.

I listened to the audiobook of this novella and I have to say, the narration by Richard Elfyn, was excellent. So I was already in a receptive mood as I prepared to set out for a long drive.

I'm actually not quite sure what the purpose is of prequels. I've asked a few authors at Lit Fests and got varied responses, though it seems it's often the publisher's idea.

In this case, we are introduced to detective inspector Ian Drake, just after he has been promoted, and his side-kick, Ceren Waits. They are an interesting pair, as he's meticulously tidy and she's, well, a bit of a slob really. As I'd never read any of Stephen Puleston's books, I had no prior image of either character, which was possibly a good thing.

Two bodies are found on a Welsh mountain, husband and wife. The wife appears to have been murdered but it's not immediately apparent how the husband came to be sprawled close by.

It would have been easy to have gone with the obvious conclusion - that the husband murdered his wife and then committed suicide, but Drake's intuition suggests there's more to it. Being his first murder enquiry, he

needs to be sure he gets it right and he persuades his superior to allow him a little more time to turn all the stones.

It did make me think about how easy it would have been for the incorrect conclusion to have been drawn and the case closed. How often must this happen??

This was an enjoyable listen, not too drawn out and fairly straight forward. I wasn't confused at the end as I have been by some books I've read recently. I'd probably give the first book in the series a try if it were to become available in audio - and especially if it's read by Richard Elfyn.

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### **djpateron says**

Devil's Kitchen is a 70 page / 2 hour 21 minute novella prequel to Stephen Pulestone's five Inspector Drake novels, set in fabulous north Wales. I listened to this via Audible, and it just happened to be the perfect length for my weekly drive to Wales. And the perfect setting too! Although this is a relatively short novella, the story is very complete, and never feels rushed, and there are enough twists, turns and dodgy suspects to keep fans of police procedurals very happy. Stephen's writing is very crisp and clean, and his descriptions, brought to life for me by excellent narration of Richard Elfyn, paint a very vivid picture of the mountainous terrain of north Wales. I think releasing a prequel novella is an excellent idea to give potential readers a decent idea of a writer and their protagonist. And with Devil's Kitchen, this pays off very well; I for one am keen to read more in the series.

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