



The Cutting Edge of Barney Thomson

Douglas Lindsay

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Murder is Getting to be a Habit!

With the press accusing him of every crime since Jack the Ripper (including Don Masson's missed penalty against Peru in 1978), Scotland's most notorious - and misunderstood - serial killer, Barney Thomson, is on the run.

The Holy Order of the Monks of St John seems the ideal hide-out for a sad little Glasgow barber with a fear of small talk. As "Brother Jacob" he's even managing to keep his hand in with some part-time barbery - even if his legendary creative genius is limited to just three styles (Mike McShane in "Robin Hood", Sean Connery In "The Name of the Rose" and "Cadfael".)

Only with the police hot on his trail, Brother Jacob has just discovered that he's chosen the only monastery in Britain that already has its full complement of serial killers!

The Cutting Edge of Barney Thomson Details

Date : Published 2000 by Judy Piatkus (Publishers) Ltd

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Author : Douglas Lindsay

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From Reader Review The Cutting Edge of Barney Thomson for online ebook

Brian says

The writing shows a clear love for language.

In turns, macabre, amusing and very, very dark. An excellent continuance of the Barney Thomson stories. Well played Mr Lindsay, well played.

Kate says

This book is the second in the Barney Thomson series. Barney is on the run from the police who believe he is a serial killer. Hiding away in an isolated monastery in northern scotland he believes that he may have found safety. that is, until the monks start turning up murdered and Barney, as the newcomer, once again finds himself under suspicion.

Meanwhile two police officers are trying to locate Barney under increasing political pressures as the inept barber is accused of any and every crime possible by the media. In spite of the challenges that searching for Barney brings, the officers eventually locate him. Along with the most pathetic excuse for mass murder that has ever been heard. This book keeps you reading and wanting to know what is happening, although at times the prose is convoluted where at others it is pure genius. Much more entertaining than the first book so if you liked that, you'll love this one.

Fiona Johnson says

The killing rampage continues! Barney flees Glasgow and heads for seclusion in a Highland Monastery....but the monks have many secrets. A great story, hilariously funny and satirical, clever plot and more genius writing from Lindsay. Bring on number 3!

Danica says

After reading The Long Midnight of Barney Thomson, I immediately went in search of the sequel. It took me a few months to actually pick it up and read it, but I think that there is definitely something about Lindsay's writing that compels one to just keep on reading. I told myself that I would only read the first one, and then when I picked up the second one, I told myself that I would stop after reading that one. Well, my first action after reading this one was to buy the third one. I think there's a pattern here...

I didn't think that Lindsay would be able to make me laugh quite as much as he did with TLMoBT, but I was pleasantly surprised to be proven wrong. Lindsay is a funny guy. I mean, sure, much of the story is ridiculous, but if you're looking for a serious story, you probably should have figured out by now that Barney's tale isn't the one for you.

Lindsay has a good, smooth style. The pages just kind of dissolve as you're reading, and before you know it, you're halfway through the book. He writes in an accessible way, and I still find it interesting to pick out with which characters he chooses to use Scottish dialects as opposed to the "proper" English of, say, the police. The humour is dry and sarcastic, and it more than does the trick. This book is longer than the first one, and though I did think it was a bit long winded in some places, I honestly enjoyed the new character focus. It was interesting to see the public and police perception of Barney even as he lived his own hell in the monastery. Also—can I just say that every description of the detectives and teatime had me salivating?

Anyway, Barney just continues to get himself into ridiculous situations. Bad luck is obviously something he cannot escape, and his life now revolves around death. Honestly, he's a bit of a dork for remaining in Scotland, but who would expect anything different from Good ol' Barney Thomson? And, is it honestly surprising that he would manage to land himself into a monastery that houses an actual serial killer? Oh, Barney.

Zogman says

The first Barney Thomson book was a hoot. I read it a few years ago and really enjoyed it. This felt like a typical second book. Riding on the back of a successful first book, it was as if the author didn't think he needed to try too hard, so he didn't.

Poor Barney doesn't get much of a look in all the way through the story. It's more the story of the two police who are trying to find Barney. As the book goes on, the story becomes a more and more unbelievable farce, and not a particularly funny one either. The football analogies become tedious after a while as does the writing style.

I've since been told that this is the weakest BT story, and I could well believe it. I'll plod on with the next installment, but if the writing doesn't improve then it's another one for the junk pile!

Gerry Watt says

The second in the Barney Thomson series (of which I bought seven in a Kindle offer I couldn't refuse) indicates that these are going to become increasingly farcical and far-fetched as time goes on. I'm not sure if that's necessarily a good thing.

Lindsay is a good writer: his two main police characters are believable flawed humans, his depictions of gory murders go into excellent horrible detail, his scene setting and descriptive proses is excellent. However, and this is a big however, his insistence on kicking every last drop of life out of every awful attempt at satirising modern life and his unwillingness to let go of a running gag no matter how badly it's running indicate that he doesn't realise that he's ruining his own books.

As I said, a good writer, but he could be a really good writer if he made some better choices (or had a decent editor to help him).

Martin Cooper says

Barney Thomson strikes again... the second book in this black comedy murder mystery series. As the now

infamous barber tries to outrun the police who are not exactly hot on his trail. He thinks he has found a safe place to go to ground only to find he is in another sticky situation.

The is another excellent book in the series which I read in a couple of sessions as it's difficult to put down and am about to download the next book to my Knindle.

Kurt says

Had to list the omnibus of seven separately due to the 2015 challenge. Review for the Omnibus:

Admittedly, it's perseverance that got me through all seven books. The first three, though interesting, were not very captivating. The last four were more flowing and well paced. Overall a good alternative read.

Karin Montin says

A follow-up to The Long Night of Barney Thomson. Barney the barber is on the lam, having accidentally killed a couple of coworkers and disposed of their bodies, along with the remains he found in his mother's freezer. The pair of Glaswegian detectives on his trail in the far north of Scotland have to contend with the worst blizzard in years (it lasts for days) and a monastery where the monks are being knocked off like flies. The newspapers blame Barney for every unsolved murder and missed goal in history, but the people he meets think he's a nice enough guy who gives good haircuts.

The fun of this book, which has a ludicrous body count, lies in the satirical headlines, women's magazine article titles, soap opera characters' names and general hyperbole, not to mention the pseudointellectual philosophical discussions among the unlikeliest of people. The blossoming attraction between the detectives adds tension, too. A good read, at times LOL quality. Not quite sure I'll read the next five in the series, though. There are limits to how often I can laugh at the name of a haircut.

I read the Blasted Heath edition, retitled The Barber Surgeon's Hairshirt, but the goodreads cover is blah.

Ronnie says

Not as good as book #1 in the Barney Thomson series, and it feels as if Douglas Lindsay has swallowed a dictionary between books. Sometime it feels as if it's written purely for the enjoyment of the author - which is fine, if it's not to the detriment of the reader.

Sarah says

The second in the Barney Thomson series I found this one held a very different pace and story to the first one, with Barney Thomson almost becoming a secondary character as it follows the police chasing him and the unknown killer with the monastery Barney now resides.

That being said - I do look forward to where Barney will go next and what awful deeds he is bound to stumble upon.

Rob Kitchin says

The Barber Surgeon's Hairshirt (originally published as The Cutting Edge) is an outrageous farce from start to finish. The tale is divided into two parallel storylines that eventually collide: DI Joel Mulholland and DS Erin Proudfoot journey across northern Scotland hunting the notorious barber Barney Thomson who's wanted in connection to multiple murders; and Thomson's refuge in a remote monastery full of men hiding from the world, amongst whom lurks two serial killers, one accused, one real. Lindsay amplifies all the elements of the plot -- the brooding romance between Mulholland and Proudfoot, the trail of local residents who didn't feel the need to tell the police when they gave Thomson lodging, the tabloid headlines that accuse Thomson of every crime and missed goal in Scotland's history, the murders in the monastery, and the bleak winter weather -- and liberally doses the narrative with humour. For the first half of the novel this works really well. The story is a funny spoof on crime fiction, told through an engaging voice. In the second half the telling becomes a bit tedious, repetitive and trying as Lindsay demonstrates his cleverness by spewing a dictionary and quotes, and the plot gets stretched to breaking point as it becomes more and more ridiculous. Nevertheless, it's an enjoyable ride overall, especially Mulholland and Proudfoot's journey, and the next book in the series is queued up on my kindle.

Bandit says

The first Barney Thomson book was so much fun, I tracked down the second one. Alas, this sequel seems to have hit a sophomore slump. It was ok, but just not the same, the pacing was slower, it wasn't quite as funny as its predecessor, it was overwhelmingly, as in difficult to read at times, scottish. Barney Thomson following the events of the first book found himself on a lam and eventually ended up hiding out in a monastery, where wouldn't you know it, there is a killer picking off monks one by one. The focus of the book however was on the detectives investigating the case and Barney ended up a fairly minor character, possibly to book's detriment. Still somewhat entertaining and a quick read, but didn't live up to the promise of the original book. And YES, the English take their sports very very seriously indeed.

Moloch says

E allora eccoci qui a scrivere anche la "minirecensione" de *Il monastero dei lunghi coltelli*, secondo capitolo (dopo *La bottega degli errori*) della saga del barbiere Barney Thomson, killer suo malgrado e ora in fuga dalla polizia che lo bracca per degli omicidi che non ha commesso. Si tratta del libro che non era piaciuto moltissimo al critico del Corriere della Sera.

Bisogna dire che se il primo me lo aspettavo diverso, anche il secondo un po' mi ha sorpreso, e questo va sicuramente a merito dell'autore. Forse però *Il monastero* (per inciso, anche qui in originale il titolo era molto diverso: *The Cutting Edge of Barney Thomson*) si colloca leggermente al di sotto de *La bottega*, probabilmente perché allora c'era la curiosità di scoprire questo nuovo, divertente personaggio. Nel primo Barney era più al centro della scena, qui molto più spazio è dato ai due poliziotti che lo cercano, che se all'inizio, beh, sembrano interessanti e simpatici, dopo un po' la loro storia stanca e si vorrebbe più Barney! E soprattutto gli altri personaggi del suo mondo, la moglie, i colleghi... E invece compare di rado, e in un

contesto totalmente diverso da quello che lo vedeva protagonista nel primo libro, a volte sembra un po' "avulso" dal resto della storia.

La trama, comunque, è ben congegnata, a tratti geniale. È una specie de *Il nome della rosa* allucinato, molto molto più pulp. Non è *difficilissimo*, a un certo punto, scoprire l'assassino, ma è *il movente* l'importante, ed è assolutamente un capolavoro, da morire... dal ridere. A un certo punto, verso la fine, l'autore è un po' "scorretto" con il lettore (nel senso che tira fuori dal cilindro un espediente che gli fa comodo e che il lettore deve prendere per buono, così), ma d'altra parte questo non è un giallo alla Agatha Christie in cui tutti gli indizi devono essere a posto, qua si cerca il grottesco, l'ironia, l'umorismo nero e tagliente. E i dialoghi a volte sono squisitamente surreali!

Non credo che l'autore abbia una grandissima opinione della religione cattolica, visto che razza di monaci abitano in questo monastero, ma tant'è. Alla fine forse avrei "preferito" una maggiore cattiveria nel finale, ma forse sono io il mostro assetato di sangue e incontentabile. Mi aspettavo che il secondo libro si concludesse con una sorta di "ritorno alla normalità": e invece mi sa che nel terzo (non ancora tradotto in italiano) si andrà avanti sul tema "Barney in fuga", e spero che non sarà una riproposizione di questo in un diverso scenario.

3/5

<http://moloch981.wordpress.com/2008/0...>

Josh says

The second book in the Barney Thomson series sees the accidental murderer on the run from police after being sought out for multiple homicides. THE BARBER SURGEON'S HAIRSHIRT is a vastly different book to THE LONG MIDNIGHT OF BARNEY THOMSON insofar as the focus and plotting sets Barney aside to a certain degree and allows for a couple colourful coppers to shine in Mulholland and Proudfoot.

The investigative nature of the story tended to be repetitive, yet this was offset by a saturation of satire. The humorous dialogue and tabloid sensationalism of Barney's many outlandishly accused crimes provides a nice form of escape from the monstrosity at the monastery Barney finds himself hiding.

Living under the persona of Brother Jacob, Barney adapts to life as a monk, cut off from real world problems yet finding himself embroiled in a much sinister turn of events. A monk seeking vengeance for his father's treatment by his fellow brothers many years ago makes the halls of the monetary run red with the blood of brothers. Naturally, Barney is once again the unfortunate suspect by virtue of his poor timing and bad luck.

Mulholland and Proudfoot, on the trail to track down the Glasgow Ripper (aka Barney Thomson), bounce from one B&B to another, shining a light on civilian incompetency and their ilk's inadequate policing until they luck out and land knee deep in the thick of a multiple homicide at the secluded monastery. Douglas Lindsay does a good job at building chemistry between the attractive and available Proudfoot and the man with a marriage on the rocks, in Mulholland – I hope Lindsay revisits these two characters again after putting so much effort into establishing them.

As with any Barney Thomson story there is a fair degree of tongue in cheek storytelling. The emphasis on soap opera tv and entertainment journalism taken to the extreme (i.e. made-up) crosses the border to the outlandish. While Barney himself is the unassuming fool, a simple yet wholehearted fellow who just wants to cut hair.

I enjoyed THE BARBER SURGEON'S HAIRSHIRT and look forward to reading MURDERERS ANONYMOUS.

This review also appears on my blog: <http://justaguythatlikes2read.blogspot.com>...
