



The Noble Outlaw

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Renovations of a school in 12th-century Exeter are disrupted by the shocking discovery of a partially mummified corpse hidden in the rafters, and the county coroner Sir John de Wolfe is called in to investigate. Richard de Revelle, Sir John's brother-in-law and founder of the school, immediately blames Nicholas de Arundell, a young outlawed knight. As Sir John discovers, Nicholas has good reason to bear a grudge against the unscrupulous de Revelle. With the victim's identity unknown and the motive a mystery, however, the murder remains unsolved. But then comes news of a second violent death, and Sir John is forced to track down the culprit in order to find the answers.

The Noble Outlaw Details

Date : Published May 1st 2007 by Simon & Schuster UK (first published January 1st 2007)

ISBN : 9780743294980

Author : Bernard Knight

Format : Hardcover 368 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Mystery, Historical Mystery, Medieval, Crime, Fiction

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From Reader Review The Noble Outlaw for online ebook

Kyle says

This is the second Crowner John mystery that I have listened to. Now that I had become familiar with the characters and the background, I found that I was truly drawn into this story, more easily drawn into the plot and more engaged in the story. I actually became more engaged and intrigued with Crowner John, his two side kicks and mentors. Each of these characters has plenty to contribute, though Crowner John is the main character. Then there is his lovely wife in whose eyes he can do absolutely nothing right, much less aid, improve, or advance their social status. But in all this, and especially in this story, they aid and respect one another, without Crowner John submitting to his usual violation of his marital vows he is more commonly known to due.

The narrator, with his english accent adds to the authenticity of the story. I am disappointed that I have only been able to find three of thirteen Crowner John stories in audio format. I believe if all thirteen were available, and being able to read from the character development, story plot, etc. from the very first book to the last, would greatly deepen the appreciation for these stories.

Tom Ford says

Still loving the series as much for the world that Knight has created as for the stories, though they continue to be strong.

Rob says

Knight has an interesting take on Medieval England: put in all the customs and politics, but use modern English to convey the characters' speech, albeit with an occasional vintage word such as 'lymer' (basically, a bloodhound) thrown in.

It may sound odd, coming from a fanatical fan of Howard Pyle's The Merry Adventures Of Robin Hood, but I find this approach effective, although I do wonder if, for example, the Cornishman, Gwyn, was that readily intelligible to his Norman boss, "Crowner" John de Wolfe. Still, the book has a certain charm, and even if the mystery is not all that gripping, it's interesting to see day-to-day life in the time close to that Pyle depicts depicted as, well, day-to-day life.

Susan says

Excellent, treasonous, romance deduction historical content has it all

Kathleen says

My favorite series, as usual, such a great read. Two more left but I now have them all for rereading. Bernard Knight is a great writer and accurately depicts this era.

I especially like that Richard de Revelle, John de Wolfe's brother in law, was forced out of his Sheriff of Devon's role some time ago. He continues to try to conspire with Prince John and other cohorts for purposes of rebellion and what we might now call "White collar crime"

Recommended for all Medieval Mystery fans as well as early Plantagenet novels.

Bettie? says

[Bettie's Books (hide spoiler)]

Spuddie says

This review applies to the audio version.

#11 Crowner John historical mystery set in Devon, UK in the 1195. A desiccated corpse is found in an old forge being renovated into a school, and due to the length of time he's been dead, the only thing clear is that the man was murdered--a nail protrudes from his neck. Eventually the Coroner and his assistants track down his identity, but shortly thereafter, two other--fresher--bodies killed and displayed in gruesome ways, are found.

The men were all prominent tradesmen, leaders of their respective guilds. And then John's wife Matilda is brutally attacked on her way home from Christmas Mass, the attacker whispering to her that the killings were revenge killings against her brother, former Sheriff Richard de Revelle, and that he'll be getting his soon enough. The finger points most strongly to a man who was declared outlaw at the behest of Richard, who then seized his lands and property, but the Crowner wonders if someone is deliberately pointing him in that direction--and then he learns that the outlaw "Nick of the Moor" has a wife who's been staying with family in Exeter and that she is Matilda's new friend from church! Once the Crowner gets to meet the outlaw and hear his story, he is determined to bring his case before the King, or at least the Lord Justiciar.

This is the first of this series that I've listened to in audio format, and have quite enjoyed it. The reader is very good, skillfully telling the story and doing an excellent job with a myriad of different voices and accents. The series itself I always find enjoyable, and the author manages to impart a lot of historical detail and information such that I'm learning things without realizing it as the story goes on. Will listen to more of these if the library has them available for sure! A.

J.D. Burke says

The 11th in the Crowner John series by Bernard Knight has the 12th century coroner finding himself torn. By law at the time anyone could lop off an outlaw's head and claim a reward and it was the duty of law officers to do so. However John finds that a certain nobleman became an outlaw by default as to have kept to the letter of the law would have resulted in his death by unscrupulous land and property grabbers. John finds himself in the strange position of having to defend the outlaw and his men against a common foe who claims to have the law on his side. Easy to read and pulls you in. Loved the story.

Sarika says

Fascinating history; interesting characters; riveting mystery.

John Lee says

Typically superb attention to detail. When you've read a number of these books, you find that your trips to Exeter take on a new dimension. While my wife is shopping on our next trip, I am going to slip away to find The Bush. The food sounds better than on offer in many places today !

Iva says

excellent story, the author describes scenes and other surroundings so well that you can almost see it. historical background and rounding of characters excellent.

Carol says

I love this period of history when Richard the Lionheart is off on Crusade (or being held for ransom) and his Dear Little Brother Prince John is plotting with nobles as sleazy as he is in a bid for power. While the Royals are in the background in this mystery, they do play a part in absentia. The mystery had me going in circles as I tried to tie the two plots together but eventually everything came together satisfactorily. And Crowner John's hound, Brutus, even got to play a part! A historical mystery good enough that I want to pick up another in the series.

Dianne says

A John Crowner novel (11) set in Exeter in 1195. A series of bizarre murders occur, and a returning crusader is forced to live as an outlaw. As usual Sir John de Wolfe's unscrupulous brother-in-law Richard de Revelle is involved. The only way to solve the murders is through contact with Nicholas de Arundel, the outlaw.

What I like about this series is the insight it gives into the legal system during this period. The post of coroner was established to raise money for Richard I. The payment for capture of an outlaw, alive or dead, was 5 shillings, the same payment for capture of a wolf.

Georgia Lengyel says

Fast moving mystery. Really well thought out.

Patricia says

I need to admit that I was listening to this on audio book while I was sick. Maybe I dozed or maybe I did not but I just could not keep track of all the characters, not to mention I didn't like the whole cast and crew. I waited and waited to connect with the story but it seemed flat to me. So I have given it up.

Tine says

Entertaining, straightforward medieval whodunnit, the plot of which I enjoyed.

The narration (especially the bits presenting the thoughts and background of the characters) is endlessly and hopelessly repetitive, though. Typos there, too.

Duncan says

Best so far (out of 11)...

Blair Hodgkinson says

I enjoy Bernard Knight's medieval mysteries, as they are usually engaging and well thought-out and consistent with the period and setting. This book is no exception.

While I enjoy his mysteries, I find some faults with Knight's writing. There is a lot of exposition (some of which can be forgiven as he takes the time to explain some of the more foreign aspects of medieval law) which might be better shown than told. Worse, in the course of a single book, Knight repeats himself a great deal. Some aspects of character backstory are shared two or even three times when once was quite sufficient. He repeats many of his idioms as well (such as "drawn like iron filings to a lodestone") to the point of distraction.

Still, I always find I look forward to the next adventure of John de Wolfe, Sergeant Gwyn and Thomas the clerk.

Carolyn Rose says

Strong sense of time and place - I felt the chill of winter in Exeter

Jessica says

While I feel that the author writes a pretty darn good book, I had trouble connecting to the main character. I really love historical mysteries, and have been able to lose myself in them very easily. But I just couldn't relate to Crowner John. And I know many people might say it is because the character is a man...but there have been many a good book with lead male characters who I related to very well. But this book, this character, was just not connecting to me. And so, despite this book being a very good story, I won't be reading anymore of this series (much to my disappointment, because I was really excited when I found this series).
