



## First Frost

*James Henry*

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## **First Frost** James Henry

It's Denton, 1981. Britain is in recession, the IRA is becoming increasingly active and the country's on alert for an outbreak of rabies. Detective Sergeant Jack Frost is working under his mentor and inspiration DI Bert Williams, and coping badly with his increasingly strained marriage. Probably not helped by the fact that he never goes home...

## **First Frost Details**

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Author : James Henry

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# From Reader Review First Frost for online ebook

## Plum-crazy says

R D Wingfield, the creator of Frost died in 2007 & this book is a collaboration of two writers (James Garbutt & Henry Sutton) who I feel have captured the style & essence of Frost extremely well. Frost's trademark sarcasm & snide remarks (especially to Mullet!) are all there as well as much of the sexism & politically-incorrecness that was a part of the early 1980's - a must for all Frost fans.

Ends with a bit of a bombshell (literally!) leaving the way wide open I guess for another tale...

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## Carolyn Rose says

Nice job of capturing Wingfield's voice and characters and extending the series.

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## Miles says

When R.D. Wingfield was invited to write "Frost at Christmas" in 1972 by MacMillan – and then not have it published until the early 1980's in Canada – little did we know then that Frost would become a television phenomenon spanning 18 wonderful years. Wingfield died of prostate cancer in 2007 and his final novel A Killing Frost published the following year.

With that in mind, James Henry (pseudonym for James Gurbutt and Henry Sutton) has authored a prequel to the Frost series and the first title (of two) is aptly called "First Frost". Written on behalf of the R.D. Wingfield Estate it breathes new life into the colourful character and one of the great television detectives of the modern era.

Denton, 1981 – Shakin Stevens has already had two number one records with "This Ole House" and "Green Door", Diana and Charles marry at St Paul's Cathedral and the United States launch the first space shuttle – Detective Sergeant Frost meanwhile is struggling with his marriage and an Abba tune he can't seem to escape!

Julie, a twelve year old girl, out shopping for a school uniform with her mother, disappears from the changing rooms while her mother (Mrs Hudson) browses the new lingerie section. In the background a stranger is watching, waiting for a chance to pounce – it takes her mother twenty minutes before she realises her daughter is missing.

Meanwhile back at Denton Division HQ (Eagle Lane) DI Allen is on a walking holiday and DI Bert Williams, just two weeks from retirement, is nowhere to be found. William Edward "Jack" Frost is the highest ranking officer at the station and Superintendent Mullet, just six months into his command, has no option but to begrudgingly hand the investigation to Frost.

With a spate of high end bank robberies, child abuse case, S&M (not to be confused with M&S!) and the

political shenanigans at the station, there's never a dull moment in "First Frost".

Full review on my blog:- <http://www.milorambles.com/2011/01/16...>

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## **Tyrone says**

As always the death of an author is a sad event, doubly so when they are the author of a series of novels with a beloved character. It must be my age but I have lost a number of authors over the last few years. RIP David Gemmell, Robert Jordan & Robert B. Parker to name a few. My relationship with R.D. Wingfield is slightly different in that I didn't really discover his books until after his death. The only disappointment I have had with them is coming to the realisation of how few Frost books were actually written.

It's always problematical, especially mid series or where there is clear space to expand on what was written, to decide if it is better for someone to attempt to continue/ finish what the author started or just leave the work unfinished but untarnished. The suspicion always comes to mind that it is simply plundering the legacy left by the author. It's worked with Stella Gemmell finishing the Troy series and Brandon Sanderson is doing a great job of finishing the epic Wheel of Time series. I have my fingers crossed that Parker's Jesse Stone will be treated as well.

In this instance I would say that 'First Frost' is certainly more hit than miss. I think it was a sensible choice to go with Frost's early career. As such they get away from direct comparisons and avoid many possible continuity issues. What we do get is a softer version of Frost. Now there could be two explanations for this. The authors could have taken into account that Frost has not yet been through the events (the death of his wife, the shooting and the award of his George Cross) which have will shape him into the character in Wingfield books. Being less charitable you could say that they have chosen to model the Frost character after the TV version (which I love) but has many of his rough edges smoothed off. A couple of other characters (Mullet in particular) don't ring completely true either, though only by small margins. I guess only time will tell.

That leaves the plot and the quality of the writing. Wingfield is a difficult act to follow. His approach to writing gave his complex plots a rather unique narrative style. I said his plots were complex, his crimes and the lives of the criminals and the police so complex and interwoven, but his writing was so good that he did that so easily. It certainly made reading them an easy but engrossing experience. His sense of time and place (especially the weather) was also something that added great texture to his work. Well the authors (because there are two) manage to replicate his style and narrative structure really well but it doesn't seem quite as effortless as when he did it.

As I said, there is more good than bad. This is an enjoyable read, well written, almost on the nail but showing great promise that there is a future for one of my favourite literary creations.

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## **sarg says**

This is a typical British who done it. I have read the Frost series by Weekfield and watched the PBS series years back. Gave this 4 stars it was as good as the original series

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## Grey853 says

Det. Jack Frost has a series of hard cases to solve. There's the disappearance of a teen and then the attack on her mother, a possible abuse case, murder of a blind man, the death of a friend, and the death of a school teacher. There's a lot going on, and Jack works tirelessly to not only do the investigation, but to avoid dealing with the rule snob of a commanding officer.

James Henry does a very good job of recreating the voice of Frost from the original novels by Wingfield.

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## Dougie says

Enjoyable, and my favourite of the prequel books. The continuity errors are a bit annoying but there is enough of Wingfield's style here to make this book very enjoyable. I'd query the blurb when the book came out - Frost younger and greener. This was set in 1981, Frost at Christmas in 1983/84. Not that much younger or greener!

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## Fiona says

At the end of last year, I won a competition on Goodreads. It's the first time I can remember that I've won something, so that was exciting, and then the book came and I got very excited because honestly, who isn't excited by owning a new hardback? Especially when it's signed. If that's not exciting to you, you have no sense of adventure.

I was even more excited, because the death of RD Wingfield is one of the greatest tragedies for detective fiction that I know of. The man was a genius. I loved his writing. I loved his characters, his effortless interweaving of subplots, the fact that he didn't feel the need to go out of his way to make every single mystery related to every other mystery and shoehorning be damned. As far as I was concerned, the man could do no wrong. Frost is a fantastic character. I am a massive fan. James and Henry, I thought, I am ready to be impressed, but it's going to take a fair bit to do it. I hope you are ready for that.

By and large, I enjoyed it. It was a clever move to make a new book a prequel to the old favourites - it gives you more of a blank canvas to work with, and perhaps you have less to worry about in terms of making deliberate references to previous books. They did a lot of good things with that - although, for me, Frost didn't feel any younger. He felt like almost the same Frost, in a slightly different departmental set-up. From a prequel, I could have done with a bit more devotion to how Frost's past worked. For preference, I would have liked to see more of his wife - I always found that intriguing, but that's a personal preference. What was there, I enjoyed.

In terms of the other familiar characters - how do I love thee, Superintendent Mullett? Let me count the ways. Mullett has always been my favourite. The social order of Denton police has always been the most interesting bit. And on that, this book did not disappoint. All the old favourites were there - a bit younger, a bit thinner, no less sarky. (Is this the first instance of Frost calling Mullett 'Hornrim Henry'? I shed a small nostalgic tear.) I come to Frost books for the mystery, but I stay for the interplay between the characters.

Top-notch.

As for the actual crime, and the detecting miscellaneous... I thought it was good, but not outstanding. Having an awful lot going on, and the characters being stretched very thinly, is par for the course with a Frost book, that's what makes it different from other crime novels. Honestly, it didn't have the ease and grace of Wingfield's writing. Close, but no cigar. It was as if, in some way, it was trying very hard to be like Wingfield's writing, but it marginally missed the mark. The unnecessary business with the gym teacher. There were *connections*, between plot strands, where there didn't need to be. Part of the genius of Wingfield, in my opinion, is that there were lots and lots of solutions, rather than one big neat one. This got that, most of the way, but not quite enough for me. The content was pretty much spot on. It got the atmosphere of Denton very well.

The whole thing took me a little while to get into, and when I did, it trundled along very well indeed. I'll be looking out for the next one - apparently there's another one? - and I'm sure I'll enjoy it. It was pretty good as a novel in its own right, but as a successor to Frost, I'm not completely convinced. However, I'm not convinced in a way that might just be teething problems - it's entirely possible that once James and Henry get into their stride, they could be onto a complete and unreserved winner. For me, they're not quite there yet. But close. Three stars.

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## Fantastišk? KŽL says

[knyguziurkes.wordpress.com/2018/11/20...](http://knyguziurkes.wordpress.com/2018/11/20...)

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## John Marsh says

Audible Library (A reminder)

It's Denton, 1981. Britain is in recession, the IRA is becoming increasingly active and the country's on alert for an outbreak of rabies. Detective Sergeant Jack Frost is working under his mentor and inspiration DI Bert Williams, and coping badly with his increasingly strained marriage. Probably not helped by the fact that he never goes home.

This episode gives a slice of incidents that Frost and his colleagues investigate with various resolved outcomes although a number of tradgies are involved

1. **Bert Williams, murdered**, has an alcohol problem and has been known to go AWOL. This time a few weeks from retirement he is found dead in his car, a murder made to look like a road accident.

2. **Sad case of the death of young Becky** where the couple were dangerous. Detective Frost tried to get the little girl into social services. He had used the doomed cover story of rabies. It worked for a time but the failure of the social services and others including the accidental leaking of the rabies ruse (No cases of recent times) picked up by the media and usual concern of bosses, media appearance and involvement prevented keeping Becky away from her mother and boyfriend Simon Trench (also roped into abuse) long enough for social services to get their act together and thus she was returned to the lethal environment and was murdered.

3. **Mrs Hudson beaten savagely by husband**

4. **Mr Hudson, auto trader, went on the run**

5. **Daughter, step daughter, Julie taken by real father** from Asda's Hudson, auto trader, went on the run

5. **Blind man found murdered in canal** his guide dog turns up.

6. **Bomb scares and misdirection**

7. **Bank robbies related to bomb misdirection**

Newly appointed Denton police chief (6 months in the job) , Mullet, is typically motivated by appearances rather than a professionalism and care for people. Like more concerned about the how the rabies ruse would look to superiors and the media that the life of the young child. Effectively his opposing support to "real" police work contributed the death of Becky along with many other incompetence people in social services etc.

Then a new lady detective Clark is in on the action. She likes Frost

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## **David Proffitt says**

R D Wingfield's loveable detective DI "Jack" Frost has long been a favourite of mine, both the books and their TV adaptation. The irascible, bumbling and totally politically incorrect detective's original appearances are a great example of how this kind of stories should be. For me, Frost's irreverent ways, his disinclination for completing paperwork and his constant battles with authority present a character I can relate to. In this, the first prequel written by the team of James Gurbutt and Henry Sutton, we are transported back to 1981. Frost is a Detective Sergeant and already has a reputation as a good detective, even if his ways are sometimes unorthodox and his manner makes him difficult to work with. Superintendent Mullet has recently arrived at the Denton station and is determined to stamp his authority on the place. For him, Frost epitomises all that is worst about the place.

Keeping with the format that made Wingfield's original series so popular and successful, in First Frost, DS Frost has to deal with several unrelated crimes, including terrorists, murder, bank robberies and a missing young girl. Trying to keep track of all the separate cases, whilst covering for absent inspectors and missing paperwork, Frost and Mullet clash from the very start.

The interweaving plots ensure the pace is consistent and at times as messy as the belligerent detective trying to unravel it all. The character of Frost is maintained throughout and this peek into his pre-Inspector days is a very clever way for the two writers to resurrect the grumpy old so-and-so.

I really enjoyed the story, the characters and the uncompromising way Gurbutt and Sutton kept faith with R D Wingfield's creation. First Frost is an excellent novel in its own right, but as part of the Frost series, it is indistinguishable from the originals. A great piece of fiction very well written.

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## **Ron says**

One of those tribute novels, the first in a series, no doubt, like the rewriting of the Bond books. Two new

guys, one named James and the other Henry, have been hired by the Wingfield estate to contrive a prequel series, showing Denton Det. Frost as a younger cop, still a Detective Sargent, not yet an inspector. It sort of succeeds, capturing the same sort of insouciant expertise of Frost, and the stuffy, career ladder-climbing buffoonery of Mullet. Several crimes weave their way through – a missing preteen, a battered two-year old, a corpse in a canal, the death of Frost’s mentor by murder. Somewhat amusing, but this is the last of this bunch I will try. If any new original Frosts turn up in the recorded book section, I will probably bite, but not this new bunch.

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## **Dorian says**

### **DNF**

Not my thing. It was a struggle to get through, since I didn't really care about anything that was happening. Two stars because it was boring, but didn't outright suck.

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## **Will T says**

Okay, so overall I guess I liked this. I've probably been spoiled by how engaging and delightful the originals were, and although I the writers have done their best to give us as close to the Frost we knew as they could, I feel maybe they've tried too hard. Better than not trying hard enough, granted, but, some of the characterisation felt more like a parody than a genuine attempt at a recreation. And please, ease up on the smoking references! It seems like every page had a comment about asking for a cigarette, feeling for his cigarettes, lighting a cigarette, wanting a cigarette, putting out a cigarette... I understand they wanted to give a sensation of period, hence the somewhat heavy handed mentions of brand names of the time, but when it distracts from the story then you've gone a little too far. So, yeah, a good book but trying a little too hard to be "Frost".

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## **Dawn Marie says**

It's not often that I'm happily surprised but I am indeed happy with the first Jack Frost prequel. Actually I haven't been this charmed since I read the original Frost "Frost at Christmas". The authors have really captured the essence of the characters and managed to build upon them. I do call this book "Frost Lite" but I don't mean it in a disparaging way. It's Frost as a younger, less bitter man. There were several times while reading the book that situations presented themselves where Frost just didn't have the quip or the unsavory insight that I'd expect (and come to love) and I thought "Jack wouldn't have let that get by." But it occurred to me that a younger Jack might.

I also enjoyed the younger, slightly more clued in and almost chummy Mullet. I love Superintendent Mullet almost as much as Frost. Mullet became a more rounded figure in this book which you can see moving into the more standoffish figure in the original series. Mullet has always reminded me of "Doctor Who's" Brigadier. Put horn rimmed glasses on the Brigadier and you've got Mullet. In fact, Frost and Mullet remind me very much of The Dr. and the Brigadier. One is holding up authority and doing everything by the book at HQ while the other is being creative, smart and rash. Grabbing his bemused companion Frost jumps into his Tardis to Denton Woods!



Gosh, I like these books and I look forward to reading more of the prequels.

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