



# Soho Black

*Christopher Fowler*

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## **Soho Black** Christopher Fowler

Welcome to Soho. London's creative square mile, a bedlam of business and backstabbing, where dreams are manufactured and office workers get off their faces. A place where being a celebrity means treating every day as your last.

Movie executive Richard Tyler is strung out, stressed up and sinking fast. He owes money to film-freak thugs, thanks to debts stacked up by his card-charging girlfriend, who has been shagging his belligerent boss, who has just fired him.

Could things get any worse?

During one particularly hypertense evening, Richard drops dead in the middle of a fashionable Soho bar. What happens next mortifies his friends and horrifies his enemies, as Richard's lifestyle of power-lunches and parties changes overnight into a fast-track trip into career hell...

## **Soho Black Details**

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Author : Christopher Fowler

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## From Reader Review Soho Black for online ebook

### D says

Bryant and May are in it, which is probably the only reason I bought it (that and Christopher Fowler's name tbh), because the cover is rubbish.

The novel itself is pretty good, feeling like a transition between Mr Fowler's earlier work (mostly horror/psychological novels) and the Bryant and May mix of horror/psychological/mystery. I feel some sort of sympathy for Richard Tyler coming from the same-ish kind of background. All in all enjoyable and horrific.

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### Dony Grayman says

Edición española. Tomo 5 de la Colección Brainstorming.

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### Olethros says

-Excesiva, irregular y, con todo, ocurrente por momentos.-

Género. Narrativa Fantástica.

Lo que nos cuenta. Richard Tyler es un ejecutivo de la industria cinematográfica de Londres, ciudad en la que está en marcha una investigación sobre unas muertes un tanto extrañas. Richard es demasiado buena persona para encajar bien allí, sin ningún éxito famoso en su haber y actualmente trabajando en un proyecto que implica un elefante vengativo y sobrenatural que persigue al que profanó un templo. Además, tiene problemas de salud, un hijo autista, algunas adicciones y bastantes deudas por culpa de una novia con la que ha roto recientemente y, por si fuera poco, está a punto de perder su trabajo. Pero su vida va a cambiar radicalmente en cuanto se muera.

¿Quiere saber más de este libro, sin spoilers? Visite:

<http://librosdeolethros.blogspot.com/...>

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### Thelan says

Absolute genius! Where has this book been hiding all my life? A brilliant combination of solid good writing, original storyline and making a psychotic, bizzare, dark plot seem very, real and relatable hence adding to the chill factor creeping into the readers head. This book was a definite pleasant surprise and find. Very much looking forward to reading more of Fowler's works in the near future. If you find authenticity of any kind, particularly in the bizzare elements of human psychology mixed with good solid storytelling and characters you won't soon forget. Pick up a copy.

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## **Graham says**

Fowler's personal favourite of his novels is an enthralling experience, an ode to those living and working in Soho, and there's nothing quite like it. At turns romantic, thrilling, shocking and just plain weird, this charts the lives of several diverse characters over the course of a week. There's a mysterious Satyr-like club owner; a high-profile stripper; a young runner about to celebrate his 21st birthday alone; a pair of odd detectives who have come right out of the X-Files, and of course the lead, Richard Tyler, a man who has a heart attack and returns to life as a zombie to take out his enemies.

The story is at its most gruesome when dealing with Tyler's gradual decomposition, something most zombie flicks take for granted. Yet there is also plenty of humour, originality, and surprise, and the best thing is the way in which Fowler weaves together all the plot strands in an easy-to-understand way. The climax is riveting, with a super twist, making this one of the hardest to classify of stories: but it's also a darned good read and constantly challenging.

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## **Soho\_Black says**

We've had them all. The film of the book. The book of the film. The new edition of the book because it's been made into a film so that you can cash in on that. So now, we have the novel set in the heart of the London film industry in Soho.

I've heard that the advice often given to aspiring writers is "write about what you know." If that advice was given to Christopher Fowler, this was the result. He works in the film industry, as a director of a film promotion company. Soho is his home. He knows the area well, and he knows exactly what goes on there, during the day and at night. Well, the film industry is open 24 hours.

The problem is that he is a little too used to Soho. The general feeling you get is that he has grown tired of Soho, has seen too much of it, is bored with it. Most of Fowler's other works are not rooted in a single spot, but have the freedom to move. Across the city in some cases, between worlds in another. This novel, on the other hand, is the literary equivalent of a factory-farmed chicken. You can feel it want to stretch its' legs and run around freely, but it's too hemmed in to move.

This is not so much a novel, more a collection of intertwined short stories involving characters from Soho. In fact, if this book were to be made into a film, it would probably have a similar feel to "Pulp Fiction", where there are several little stories, with a main story overlaid and you cut between scenes from different people and then see how it all comes together towards the end.

The main story here involves Richard Tyler. He's not really having a very good time of it at the moment. He's working as a film executive in Soho, and he's not really very good at it. He has a problem, you see. Honesty. He's got a lot of it! He's not really driven enough, either. He wants to see ideas become films, but he's not prepared to take money from people who haven't got a chance of having a successful film. His drive to see films succeed is over-running his own success.

Due to this, he's just been sacked by his boss, and his wife has just left him. The reason his wife left? She was having an affair with his boss. Add to this a disabled son he feels guilty about putting into care, the recent death of his best, and only, friend in the film industry, and the constant use of cocaine, which has

resulted in him being chased by unofficial debt collectors who are going to do nasty things to him if he doesn't give them a lot of money by Friday.

What else can go wrong? Well, just the one thing. After taking some cocaine to calm his nerves, he finds himself so laid back he's dead. OK, great. The End. Short book, fine, let's go. But no. Wait. He's dead, and yet he's not. He's aware that he's dead, but he's somehow still able to move, walk, and talk. After checking in a medical textbook, he figures that he has about 48 hours to accomplish everything he wants to, and nothing can hurt him since, after all, he's dead. What's the worst that can happen now? Suddenly Richard has the drive he needs and the plans he wants to push through, and sets about doing so. His death has given him a new lease of life.

Running alongside and throughout this story is that of Imago. No, it's not a person; it's a new drug. A chap called Malcolm Cotton has found a way of making a new "natural" drug from butterflies. Unfortunately for him, this knowledge has got him killed, but not before he's passed along his stock to a friend, and sold some of it on. Sadly for his customers, the result of taking the drug is to induce swift and severe psychosis, and most of the people who have taken it have killed themselves in fairly spectacular fashion, often taking a few other people along with them. As if to indicate the intertwining of people's lives in Soho, Cotton's friend is a guy called Lucas – who works as a runner at Richard Tyler's film company.

The murder of Malcolm Cotton means that detectives Bryant and May become involved, trying to trace the drug, and work out who killed him. Of course, while they're trying to find this out, more people take the drug and death happens all around them. In fact, about the only death that they're not interested in is Richard's. Regular readers of Fowler will recognise these names. Detectives Bryant and May are the only two characters who appear in more than one of his novels, along with Sergeant Longbright, who assists them.

Mixed in with this is the story of Judy, who is caught under, and trapped by the spell of nightclub owner Midas Blake, someone the police suspect of killing Cotton. He employs the two debt collectors, Waldorf and One Eighty, who are chasing Richard for his debts, as well as Glory, Soho's best stripper. There are stories of films and edits, deals and drugs.

The ending, sadly, leaves me cold. There's a twist towards the end which asks more questions than it answers, and doesn't really fit in with what has gone before. Endings have never been Fowler's strong point anyway, but this novel doesn't really end. It just stops. You get to the last page to find that the novel is over, but it hasn't really finished. It's highly disappointing.

It's apparent that Fowler is attempting to cover all aspects of Soho life within the novel. The end feeling is that he's tried to be all things to all men, but has ended up as the proverbial "jack of all trades." Master of none is entirely right. There are several stories, but none of them feel complete.

Fowler writes in his traditional short chapters, which normally serve to keep the pace of his novels high. It achieves the same effect here but because it is rare that two chapters are on the same character's part of the story, the end result is confusion, rather than satisfaction. You end up being turned around more often than on a fairground ride. The feeling of nausea isn't quite there, but the sense of disorientation is.

In the end, this novel leaves you with a few questions which, unfortunately, don't relate to the plot. You're not really all that bothered about what happens next. What you do wonder is this: of all the characters, has Fowler based any of them on himself, and if so, which one. My money's on Berry, Richard's boss. Then there's the cover. There are a few photos of people who, I assume, are meant to be characters from the book.

There's some entertainment to be had by trying to work out which one is which. I think I've got Glory, Berry and Midas Blake pegged, but I'm not sure about the others.

Thirdly, you wonder if this was originally intended as a film script. It doesn't really work as a novel as there's very little character development. It's just a week in Soho. However, you can see it working as a film, as it has the elements it would need. It's fairly short, so everything would fit in, there's plenty going on. There's murder, drugs, the dead coming to life, and a woman who takes her clothes off for a living. It does feel like a book that would work better on the screen – and I say this as someone who generally disapproves of film versions of novels. You can't believe that all this would go on in a week in Soho, which is another reason it would be a gripping film – the suspension of disbelief it requires for the normal person. If you work in the film industry, it probably hits too close to home to be attractive anyway.

In London at least, this seems to be the most readily available of all Fowler's novels, being one of the few you can find relatively easily on the shelves of the high-street bookshops. I guess this may explain why he's not as popular as he deserves to be. If this is the starting point for your reading of Fowler's novels, you're not likely to go searching for another in a hurry. It's a great pity, as he's a very good writer, who deserves far more attention than he seems to get. Generally speaking, you'd be better off spending your money there. If you want a recommendation, start where I did, with "Psychoville"

This review may also appear under my name at any or all of [www.ciao.co.uk](http://www.ciao.co.uk), [www.thebookbag.co.uk](http://www.thebookbag.co.uk), [www.goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.com), [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk) and [www.dooyoo.co.uk](http://www.dooyoo.co.uk)

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### **Sharon says**

I wasn't really sure whether I was reading a psychological masterpiece or a very odd science fiction novel.

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### **Anji says**

PLEASE BE AWARE THAT THERE ARE SPOILERS IN THE FOLLOWING REVIEW. I don't think that this is one of Mr Fowler's better novels. I had to remind myself that Richard Tyler was indeed dead, because the story twisted and turned so much with all the side plots and other characters that sometimes I had to rewind to jog my memory. The episode on the roof where he has some sort of awakening...epiphany if you like, made me think for a short while that his whole physical and mental situation had been brought about by the chemicals he had been ingesting on a regular basis. It seemed that he was in the throes of some dreadful, horrific nightmare. What about Barbara... was she also dead? Had she been the woman he had abducted and tied up? A little confusing at times, as the story jumped about so much, but having said that I always enjoy the humour and the wonderfully descriptive style that Christopher uses in his stories.

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### **Scribble Orca says**

London, in the summer, is like a bitch on heat. Sweltering, can't settle, roams around in your mind and makes you dream of electronic sheep. The sun never quite disappears, hovering at the edge of the horizon as you stagger slick and sweaty from club to club, chasing the buzz of the next beat, and grinning brilliantly at you as you crawl home, spent and abused, from another night in the pleasure heart of the capital. Be grateful you

can sleep it off, despite the flies congregating along your carcass.

Richard, lame, never really in the game, and rolling punch-drunk with the unravelling of his career (his ex-wife has already seen it all coming and done a bunk, leaving his autistic child in the welfare hands of the state) realises, at the bottom of the stairs, that his massive heart attack has left him very, very, dead. His body is no longer a temple, but a charnel house, and the loss of his earthly goodness is the proverbial kick-in-the-butt he needs to metamorphose into his nemesis, his partner in film crime (who incidentally, has been boning Richard's ex). Now that he's dead, Richard feels he has enough reason to rid himself of his partner. He shoots him, and his ex-wife, into the bargain.

Meanwhile, something odd is happening on the street. The punters, chasing the elusive Soho good time, are getting off on public suicide. Blood is being spilled in tres bizarre fashion. A couple of unlikely cops are called in to piece together the motley clues, leading to the local minder, Midas, who possesses the rare ability to everything he touches not just into gold but green. Lovely, vibrant, verdant, blossoming, green. Midas is a modern day Satyr.

It is only when Richard realises the truth of his life, the necessity of his death, that Midas bankrolls his next film project. Richard doesn't win any Oscars, but at least his week in hell has been worth it.

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### **Andrew says**

Reminded me a little of a Will Self Novella I had read about the dead living in the suburbs, although I also was reminded of a Nicholas Cage movie I saw a while back 'Vampires Kiss' in as much as it seemed to hint at the insanity of a business man where a apparent high pressure job leads to delusion. That said there's more to the book than all this and it was an enjoyable read

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### **Ignacio Senao f says**

Extraña novela narrada en primera persona cuando trata sobre un productor cinematográfico que lucha con todos por producir películas clásicas, mientras que sale todo mal. Le da un infarto. Muere. Mientras que se descompone el sigue vivo y a toda prisa querrá dejar todo bien atado para que su hijo autista no le falte de nada.

Por otro lado vemos a través de diferentes personajes como en el Soho una droga nueva crea el caos.

Tendrá un final inesperado.

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