



Dead Pretty

David Mark

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One girl missing. One girl dead. A stunning new novel from one of Britain's most original crime writers, *Dead Pretty* finds Detective Sergeant Aector McAvoy and Detective Superintendent Trish Pharaoh grappling with vigilantes, unsolved murders, and a killer far too close to home.

While a colleague struggles to solve the recent killing of a man too vile to have mourners, Aector McAvoy, Detective Sergeant of the Humberside Police's murder squad, is still haunted by the past. His devotion to his cases is unshakeable, but it's been nine months since Hannah Kelly disappeared in the quiet English countryside, and it is becoming harder to convince himself that she is just missing instead of dead... especially when another young woman is found brutally murdered.

As McAvoy looks for connections between the women, his boss Trish Pharaoh is preoccupied with troubles of her own. Reuben Hollow--a man convicted of murder with the help of perjured testimony from the Humberside Police--has just been released from prison after a high-profile wrongful conviction suit, putting Pharaoh's reputation at stake. But when her house is broken into and her children threatened, she soon learns it is not only her good name that's in danger.

As the cases intertwine and Pharaoh's behavior becomes more erratic, McAvoy must question who he can trust if he is to uncover Hannah's fate and find justice for the dead--without joining them himself.

Gritty, atmospheric, and endlessly entertaining, David Mark's *Dead Pretty* is an absorbing, twisty ride readers won't soon forget.

Dead Pretty Details

Date : Published January 28th 2016 by Mulholland

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Author : David Mark

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From Reader Review Dead Pretty for online ebook

BookGypsy says

Four Cups of Latte????

An Intense Crime Thriller. Dead Pretty is the fifth book in this series. I wish I had read the previous books before reading this. It would have been that much more powerful. This is my first David Mark read. This is a gritty crime thriller with an obsessed detective looking for a missing girl. When another is found brutally murdered. Detective Sergeant Aector McAvoy starts piecing the two together. A multi layered dark and very detailed plot. I enjoyed this creepy thrill into the dark side of crime fiction.

Thank You

Penguin Books

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Book Gypsy

Novels & Latte

Cleo Bannister says

The book opens with Aector on a family picnic, although he's not fooling his wife Roisin who knows that he is trying to find the body of a girl who has been missing for nine months, an unsolved case that preoccupies him. But, life as a policeman never allows him to relax for long and no sooner have they eaten their sandwiches when a call comes in about a murdered girl.

What I particularly enjoyed with this novel was the multiple strands. A missing persons investigation and a murder would be enough for most crime writers to handle, but no we also have Reuben Hollow who has been released from prison, put away by Aector's boss, Trish Pharaoh, on what appears to be false evidence, and who is now political dynamite as a result. With Pharaoh looking as if she is going to be hung out to dry Aector's natural protective instinct goes into overdrive, but his boss seems to be changing; still feisty but drinking far too much and behaving secretively, he's not quite sure what she wants from him anymore.

As in many police procedurals there are plenty of politics and rivalry between the teams as to who gets the 'best' cases although within the Special Investigation team things are relatively settled, just as well because the investigation into the murder is complex with leads taking them all in many different directions, none of them particularly good!

This was an engaging read and although Aector still comes across as a little too good to be true,, it makes a nice change from the gruff surly policemen that often inhabit this genre. I warmed far more to Trish Pharaoh in this book perhaps because we got to view her home life in a bit more detail and so I appreciated more of what made the core of the woman, and which aspects of her character she has capitalised to get on, both in her career and life in general. It was interesting to see some rivalry between her and Roisin, both women adore Aector and with one his wife and the other his boss, you have to wonder quite what is going to happen next.

One thing is for certain is that this is not a gentle read, the complexities of the plot coupled with the smart pace alone keeps the tension high from page to page and there are some fairly gruesome scenes. I thought I was fairly shock-proof but this book made me wince more than once along the way! I'm also not sure what whoever is in charge of Hull's tourism thinks, as the descriptions of the city are less than flattering but there is nothing like a grim backdrop to set the scene for a disturbing crime!

I'd like to thank the publishers Hodder & Stoughton for allowing me to read a review copy of this book ahead of publication on 28 January 2016. I'm now well and truly motivated to read the missing episodes before book six gets published (sorry for those of you who think this is completely the wrong way to manage a series!)

Bookread2day says

David Mark has written five novels in the McAvoy series. Two girls have disappeared and then killed. The Serious and Organised Crime Unit of Humberside Police had been searching for Hannah Kelly since August last year. Hannah Kelly remains a missing person she vanished just twenty-six miles away from where Ava Delaney was killed. They both are of similar age. David Mark knows how to write crime fiction as he spent seven years as a crime reporter.

Mrs Mommy Booknerd <http://mrsmommybooknerd.blogspot.com> says

#FirstLine ~ She's blonde, near enough.

Twisty, turny and unpredictable Dead Pretty was certainly a thrill. With a story that was quite absorbing and characters that kept me on my toes this read was one that will stay with me for some time. I loved that I never knew quite what was going to happen and was kept in suspense. A great read for those that want to escape into a story and to lose track of time!

Babs says

First of all I would like to thank Bookbridgr and Mulholland for sending me a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Unfortunately, this book just wasn't for me. I know there are plenty of fans of *David Mark's* books, and I can see from other reviews on GoodReads that my 1* review is very much the exception, rather than the rule. Perhaps it's because this is the 5th book in the series, but the first that I've read, so I found it hard to get into the characters. Who knows. Either way it wasn't for me.

I have an issue in general with detectives in murder/mystery/psychological thrillers having silly names, and "Aector McAvoy" is no exception. Aector?! It's a gaelic name according to the author, but not one I've ever come across. On top of that one of the characters insisted on calling him "Hector" throughout the book. I thought it was a typo at first, but it was so consistent I decided it must be a "character trait" even though it

was intensely annoying.

I couldn't get on board with the writing either. Another issue I have is the overuse of metaphors in writing, and this book is absolutely peppered with them. Open practically any page and you can find some ridiculous metaphor ...

"Jez Gavan and his partner have burrowed in at number 17 like ticks in a dog's back leg" (p68)

"I still receive a birthday card from Doug', says Jackson-Savannah, like a teenage girl showing off a signed photograph from her favourite boy band" (p56)

"... a billion tiny raindrops hovering like flies" (p202)

And so it goes on. There's even one comparing someone's eyes to blue cheese, which annoyingly I can't find in the book as I write this review. I really should keep notes as I go of such annoying turns of phrase.

There are also lot of repeated phrases including lots of "running his/her tongue over his/her teeth", words "greasy" with regret, and lots of inaccuracies such as "scalped underarms" (you can only scalp a scalp!) and someone who was described as "making a fist with his toes" which almost had me throwing the book across the room in frustration!

All the literary annoyances aside, I couldn't really get on-board with the storyline either. It starts with "Aector" being unable to leave a cold case behind and telling his wife, in-depth, all about a missing girl. It then gets very confusing with so many characters coming and going, so many (seemingly unrelated) accidents, gangsters, ex-convicts and police politics, it was hard to follow at times. Even when I finally got to the conclusion it was completely underwhelming.

As I say, this is the 5th in the series and there are plenty of fans of *Mark's* books. I'm afraid I am just not one of them.

This review was originally posted on Babs' Bookshelf

Liz Barnsley says

This is book 5 in the McAvoy series and I've been a pretty quiet fan of it throughout to be honest, I have a little collection on my (one of many) bookshelves and when I got the chance to read *Dead Pretty* early there was just no way I was turning that down.

There is a peculiar brilliance to David Mark's writing that just gives this particular crime series an oddly magical edge over most of the others out there – addictive quality in spades but also deeply fascinating character studies and a main protagonist to die for -the uniquely defined gentle giant that is DS Aector McAvoy. His personality and that of those around him (particularly wife Roisin and his boss Trish Pharoah)

really resonates – you will be immersed before you know it into their world, where violence is often rife and walking the moral line is not always easy.

In “Dead Pretty” Aector is searching for a missing girl, resolutely and with determination. Then another girl is found murdered, a body is discovered on another estate – on top of that Trish is behaving quite oddly after her career has taken a hit from a rather enigmatic and intriguing recently released prisoner. This sets the scene for a truly riveting story, absolutely chocka block full of nail biting moments (I’m not even exaggerating I did really bite nails!) but also plenty of the more contemplative and thoughtful introspection that I’ve come to expect and love from this author.

Its a heady mix for sure for any crime fiction fan – and actually for anyone, why limit the field – they are intuitively done so you can start anywhere but also will be completely rewarded by reading in order, so take your pick. Having followed Aector from his first appearance back in The Dark Winter I am still completely in love with him and his supporting cast of highly alluring friends and family – with Dead Pretty David Mark has taken it up a notch if that is even possible so all of these come highly recommended from me.

And do hurry along another one. Yes I do sometimes wish there was a magic book fairy who could grant book wishes. This is one of those times – I finished this earlier today in a rush of adrenalin and a lot of crossed fingers for the outcome I hoped for – what I got was ****redacted**** and it was blinking brilliant!

Happy Reading Folks!

Anna At A Wondrous Bookshelf says

This book was initially a little confusing to me. It took me some time to get used to David Mark's writing, but that wasn't necessarily a bad thing. This is book five of Detective Sargeant Aector McAvoy and not having read any of the previous books in the series might have contributed to my initial confusion. Once I got into the book, I just couldn't put it down.

I love a good crime story, and this is a great one. The story is a bit disturbing with some pretty descriptive scenes, but overall this is a gritty and riveting story that would've probably received 5-stars had I read the other books. I highly recommend this one. David Mark got me hooked, and his other books just made it to my TBR list.

I received an early copy of this book for free from Penguin Random House First To Read in exchange for my honest review.

Jane Fenn says

Loved it!! So enjoy the relationships at the centre of this series of books and intrigued to be exploring more of the back stories of the main characters. It feels rewarding to understand what drives them and what they are fighting against or escaping from. The plot is intriguing and, as you've probably grown to expect from David, explores the darker side of romance and obsession but with a plot that's a little outside the norm! The

pace is fantastic; at times, intricate details are used to enrich the mental picture, whilst, when necessary, only the minimum necessary is recounted to support the faster moving scenes. Fabulous chemistries add to the tension but will undoubtedly also develop further in future books. You couldn't ask for more, other than, when does the next book come out?

Faith says

This is the fifth book in the series about Detective Sergeant Aector McAvoy and Detective Superintendent Trish Pharaoh. However, for some reason book 6 seems to have been published in the US before book 5 and I've already read 6. I've also read 2 of the earlier books in the series. It's probably better to be a little familiar with the characters, but this is a self contained story so it can be read as a standalone.

McAvoy is haunted by the disappearance of Hannah Kelly 9 months ago but now he has a new case to deal with, the murder of another young woman, Ava Delaney. Pharaoh has her own problems, including her increasing alcohol consumption, a rebellious teenaged daughter, her husband who suffered a severe stroke and a couple of thugs who want to collect payment for her husband's gambling debts. Pharaoh also suffered career damage when she sent Reuben Hollow to jail for a murder that turned out to be self defense. His conviction was also based on tainted evidence. I have always found Pharaoh to be a much more interesting character than McAvoy who is too good to be true, and I absolutely loathe McAvoy's wife and I keep hoping a truck hits her. I initially didn't think I would like this series but it has grown on me.

The author does a good job of weaving together a lot of disparate threads. As in his other books, he has a fondness for creepy and sadistic crimes and he also has a fondness for Pharaoh's breasts, which he mentions every 10 pages. I wouldn't be upset to see either of these obsessions axed in his next book.

I received a free copy of this book from the publisher.

Nolene Driscoll says

I was given an ARC of this book via Netgalley in return for an honest review.

This is the first in the McAvoy series I have read and I must now go back and read the books I have missed. This is excellent. A murder mystery with several different threads pulling you in and keeping you interested until the end. Several twists and turns to keep you focused and turning the pages.

What is the link, or is there a link, between the murder of two young girls and the release of Reuben Hollow? Why is McAvoy's boss, Trish Pharaoh, acting strangely?

What also fascinated me was the character of McAvoy who appears to be a large intimidating character who would love any excuse for a fight but is in fact a gentle giant who likes nothing better than spending time with his wife and children. He is not your typical murder detective.

Great book, looking forward to reading more by this author.

Deborah says

The links between the disappearance of Hannah Kelly and the butchered body of Ava Delaney are tenuous at best, but that doesn't diminish DS McAvoy's adamant that the two women were murdered by the same person.

I found his obsession with Kelly's disappearance somewhat macabre... taking his family on a picnic to the spot she disappeared. And not for the first time.

McAvoy's boss DS Trish Pharaoh is of little help on the case.... distracted following the release of a man put away for the (accidental) death of another. Reuben Hollow has become obsessed with Pharaoh following his release and I was stunned by her behaviour towards Hollow and indifference towards the case at hand.

Of course we learn more later but as this was my first outing with the hard-drinking effed-up Pharaoh I wondered what the hell I'd wandered into.

I didn't find McAvoy or Pharaoh particularly likeable and found it hard to engage with either.

I almost put this aside several times at the beginning but ploughed on. Ultimately the plot was an interesting one but I suspect my lack of history with the series was responsible for my frustration with this book.

Mark included some backstory but I felt a bit like I was at a party where I knew no one and those present made little effort to befriend me.

Brenda says

David Mark tends to write what is initially a confusing story. It is imperative to remember the characters and their relationships. Chapters end and those characters reappear in a later chapter. The plots move slowly because there is a lot of atmospheric description and internal thinking.

Some of my confusion in this book stemmed from certain main characters behaving in uncharacteristic manners. Something didn't feel right, and the author reflected my confusion in Aector McAvoy's thoughts. He was a wreck, too. I found it hard to believe he took his wife and daughter somewhere dangerous. Ah, well, all is revealed in the end.

So, another enjoyable book set in foggy Hull. I will be reading the sixth book in the series soon, and then must wait for the seventh to be published.

Robert Intriago says

The books keep on getting better and darker. McAvoy is a by-the-book policeman who tries his hardest to follow the rules and apprehend the perpetrators. The trouble is that the women around him, including his wife, straddle the line between good and bad and sometimes lean towards the dark side. The author does such a wonderful job with the characters of Helen, Trish and Roison that at times McAvoy becomes a ghost.

I look forward to the next book.

Rachel Hall says

This review also featured on www.crimepieces.com

It seems hard to believe that Dead Pretty sees the fifth outing of DS Aector McAvoy in a series which first made an appearance in 2012. In that time, David Mark has quickly established himself as a writer with a reputation for his gritty police procedurals featuring the gentle giant DS McAvoy. Consistently strong on characterisation and with superb dialogue, Mark delivers a powerful story with the victims of some of the very darkest crimes of society right at its heart and a wry line in black humour along the way.

This is a series which I first encountered with book three, Sorrow Bound, which read well as a standalone but also left me with a need to hear more from both David Mark and his characters, in particular boss DS Trish Pharoah. Whilst it is wife Roisin with her traveller background that so many are keen to point out as what makes Aector so distinct, it is his rapport and relationship with Pharoah which really shines through and makes this series a winner.

Stubborn and relentless in his search for justice, the polite and restrained McAvoy seems the opposite of his brassy and often abrasive superior. Yet these two are both dedicated detectives, and readers learn that this is a team who have grown together over time. From his earnest years at the inception of the series, Pharoah has guided McAvoy and he, in turn, has shown her the benefit of not always storming in with all guns blazing. There is a believable chemistry between the pair and a mutual respect and affection is evident.

Dead Pretty sees the team in Hull facing numerous problems against a backdrop of scarce resources and an increasing workload. David Mark presents a picture of the despondency and disillusionment which prevail among the rank and file officers and the black humour which the characters call on to keep morale up feels natural. Aector is steadfastly searching for a missing girl and his devoted wife Roisin knows that his failure to find her is haunting him. When another girl is found brutally murdered, he looks for the connections between the two. DC Helen Bremberg, on her return from maternity leave, finds herself an unwilling secondee to the Drug Squad and back working for her nemesis, DI Shaz Archer. However, her discovery of a body in a disused property on a council estate and what looks like a victim of a vigilante attack draws her back within the domain of her former colleagues.

Whilst I found the connections between the two girls that McAvoy identifies somewhat tenuous, and whilst I retained my scepticism of the likelihood of such an occurrence, it did not spoil my enjoyment of Dead Pretty. David Mark taps into wider media debate surrounding feelings toward those who commit vigilante attacks and an individual's right to protect themselves and their family which in turn leads some of those who work within the unit to evaluate where they stand on the issue.

Mark does a magnificent job in painting a vivid picture of Hull, a city where picturesque rural villages stand shoulder to shoulder with sink estates and he delivers an authentic picture of a busy city with a diverse population. With trendy drinking haunts side by side with the altogether more unsavoury goings on in society, Dead Pretty also makes interesting social observations. With the odd snippets of information about the people who inhabit the city, Mark speaks volumes about the people who choose to make this city their home.

Dead Pretty can be read and enjoyed as a standalone, but I doubt one encounter with McAvoy and Pharoah will be enough. There is no doubt these two work together well. If you are looking for a gritty police procedural with a strong moral compass and a splendid eye for dark humour then look no further than David Mark. Dead Pretty makes for a pleasingly complicated and satisfying novel.

Christine says

Everybody seems to have read Dead Pretty and discovered Aector McAvoy for themselves. I'm late to the party. This is the fifth in the series, with well established characters all in place. Welcome to Hull noir, written by David Mark.

I don't like starting series, mid way through. You miss out on continuity and history. I felt like I was trying to piece together who was who from the first page and slightly struggling. It was exciting meeting McAvoy and his tough boss, Trish, in spite of my initial confusion. They leapt out of the page and made me stand up and take notice. In Dead Pretty, a teenager has gone missing and this is preying on the mind of McAvoy. He even takes his family out on a day trip, to where the girl could be buried. He is obsessive, in his need for answers and determined to hunt for the truth. Another girl in similar circumstances goes missing, which intensifies the pressure for McAvoy. Trish Pharoah, as well as having the most complicated home life ever, is bizarrely making friends with someone she banged up. Has she crossed over a professional line? Will Trish and McAvoy capture a killer in their midst?

Not unsurprisingly I found myself loving the dark world created by David Mark and his crime fighting duo, McAvoy and Trish Pharoah. This is not a nice safe place. Violence, death and a beautiful harsh realism is the order of the day. Hull is not what you expect. Hull is not dull!

There is something quite endearing about McAvoy, in his caring and protective persona. I could easily see myself liking him far too much. He is the sort of bloke that you want on your side. Although I'm not sure I bonded with McAvoy's wife. I'm not overly fond of too much happiness in relationships, in crime novels. Trish was just brilliant, tough and pretty exciting to read about. By the end of the book, I was cheering them on and gasping at the fabulous twists and turns. The resolution was spot on!

If like me you haven't discovered McAvoy, give him a go! I guarantee you will be charmed, by the northern humour and the tough storylines. David Mark has the thumbs up from me. I must check out the rest of the series.
