



## **Dark Waters**

*Mary-Jane Riley*

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**Dark Waters** Mary-Jane Riley

**A darkly compelling psychological thriller, full of twists and turns, perfect for fans of Louise Jensen, Cass Green and Alex Lake.**

**Secrets lie beneath the surface...**

Two men, seemingly unconnected, are discovered dead in a holiday boat on the Norfolk Broads, having apparently committed suicide together.

Local journalist Alex Devlin, planning an article on the dangers of internet suicide forums, starts digging into their backgrounds.

But Alex's investigation soon leads her to a much darker mystery – one that will hit closer to home than she could possibly have imagined, and place the lives of those she loves in terrible danger.

## Dark Waters Details

Date : Published March 16th 2018 by Killer Reads

ISBN :

Author : Mary-Jane Riley

Format : Kindle Edition 332 pages

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## **From Reader Review Dark Waters for online ebook**

### **Karina says**

Two men are found dead on a little cruiser moored in the Norfolk broads (small waterways surrounded by marshes, meadows and woodland).

At first sight it looks like a suicide pact, although a strange one as both men don't seem to have a lot in common. Ales Devlin, a not so very successful journalist, is intrigued by the setup and starts digging.... the past has an ugly habit to emerge when you don't expect it...

What makes this a fabulous read, apart from a very good storyline that keeps you guessing, is the personality of the main character. Yes, she is a nosy journalist, but she is not a monster, she feels guilt, empathy, compassion. It is a welcome change to all the detectives, inspectors, reporters, amateur sleuths who are arrogant, so sure of themselves, rude, absolutely obnoxious.... I really liked it!

[www.booksdogsandcats.wordpress.com](http://www.booksdogsandcats.wordpress.com)

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### **Rachel Sargeant says**

Well written. Likeable main character. I'd read another book by this author.

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### **Kimberly says**

Apparently Dark Waters is the third book in the Alex Devlin series. I had no clue that this book was part of a series, so obviously this is the first of the series that I have read. It was fine to read as a standalone, I didn't feel like I was missing a bunch of backstory or anything.

Alex, working as a freelance journalist comes across what at first appears to be a double suicide. Of course Alex decides to do some digging and gets the feeling that this story will be big. She continues digging for information along with digging herself a hole.

This book started off slowly, but quickly picks up pace and sucked me in. Despite this being book three, I easily got to know Alex throughout the book and it kept me reading until the end.

Thank you to Netgalley & the publisher for allowing me to read this book as an ARC.

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### **Cleo Bannister says**

Wow, having fallen a little bit in love with tenacious journalist Alex Devlin at the start of this series; Where the Bad Things Are, there is always a tiny worry that your heroine can let you down. Oh no, this book opens with a frankly gruesome description of bodies decay and didn't stop twisting my emotions hither and thither until I sadly turned the last page.

Two bodies are found dead in a barge on the Norfolk Broads and Alex just happens to be in the area at the time. Seeing a chance to make a scoop she chats to the boat owner and the police ringing her old boss Bud Evans to see if he's willing to run a piece. Within a day or so the verdict of suicide being the one the police are going with unsurprisingly as the deceased connected over the internet on a suicide website. Now I love it when crime fiction takes in (the often depressing) contemporary twists and although I'd vaguely heard of such sites, I was interested to see the character's take on them too.

As always Mary-Jane Riley spoils her readers with a number of different strands all being played out simultaneously giving the reader no chance to catch their breath. We have the most recent past covered to give us some idea of what has happened in the gap between the end of *After She Fell* and the start of *Dark Waters*. We see the family continue to come to terms with the actions of her sister which dominated the first book and we also visit Cambridge University in the early 1970s, in haunting extracts from a first year's foray into this great place of learning.

I love the fact that Alex is a journalist rather than a Police Officer as that way she isn't so bound by procedures, or the need to act as a team. Some of the lighter scenes see her negotiating a way to stay on the story when Bud dispatches Heath from the crime desk to file the story. The battle between doing a more worthwhile story rather than extreme coupon is so compelling that Alex, much to the disgust of her friend Lin, is prepared to use her free time to dig into the lives of those who died on the barge but only if Heath lets her in on what he's found out so far. I wonder how often this kind of dynamic plays out in the world of the freelance journalist.

As in the previous two books, you can't doubt that any of these characters are anything other than real people.

With so much action going on it must be easy for the author to lose the oomph that makes the characters who they are, but not Mary-Jane, each one from primary to secondary characters are absolutely alive and kicking (well apart from the dead ones!) The plotting is ingenious with the steps along the way being revealed at just the right point to keep the storyline moving forward without ever feeling that the author is holding out on us.

I raced through *Dark Waters*, thrilled to catch up with Alex, delighted with the twists and turns that this tale took us on and so I turned the last page, sad to say goodbye, until next time!

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### **Kaisha (The Writing Garnet) says**

All reviews can be found on my blog at <https://thewritinggarnet.wordpress.com>

Oh how glad I am that 'Dark Waters' can be read as a standalone! I have one of the previous novels on my forever growing TBR pile which I haven't gotten round to devouring yet. Don't be put off by the fact that this book is the third book in the series as I believe it can be read very well on its own. That said, there were some parts of the book which I got a bit lost with as references were made to the previous book.

'Dark Waters' is definitely a fast paced read with so much grit for readers to be able to sink their teeth into. I really enjoyed the mystery element to the storyline as it kept me guessing until the very last page, whilst also keeping my interest piqued.

Be prepared to go on a ride of a lifetime though, as this author seems determined to make her readers work

as she takes the storyline down various routes at different times. As I usually get confused by so much happening at one time, I was a little bit weary but I needn't have worried at all. Despite 'Dark Waters' being on 'fast speed' for the entire duration of the book, the author managed to deliver a flawless and intense storyline in such a seamless manner.

'Dark Waters' may be full of mystery, murder, and truck load of mayhem, but it is a book which I thoroughly enjoyed. This author certainly knows how to keep her readers interested, and this author certainly knows how to write such three dimensional, refreshing characters who you won't be able to forget in a hurry!

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### **Denise says**

"Nothing was black and white in life, nothing was certain."

Alex Devlin has moved from London where she previously worked as a journalist for THE POST. She fills her time doing a bit of freelancing, feature stories, etc. Her father suffers from early onset dementia and her sister, Sasha, is being released from the psych institute where she was committed. Alex returned to Sole Bay to be close by to help them out.

Her quiet and somewhat lonely life is disrupted, however, when two men are found dead on a pleasure boat off the Norfolk Broads. Her investigative instincts kick in when she discovers that the two men were chatting online about suicide. When she learns the identity of the men, she calls her old boss in London and begs to be put on the story but another reporter, Heath Maitland, is sent down instead. Alex and Heath agree to a quid pro quo as there is something that Alex wants him to do for her in exchange for her doing a lot of the legwork for the story. Abruptly, both are called off by the home office, but Alex can't let it go. She's figured out some interesting connections...

This was a mystery with a lot going on in the plot. Many different characters -- some who featured in the previous 2 books in the series (which, unfortunately, I have not read). That said, there was enough information about some of the backstory so that I didn't feel entirely lost. It moved along quickly with the pieces slowly coming into place. Of course there is no one that Alex can work with or trust while she is busy ferreting out the truth. Goes to show, again, that the past won't stay buried.

I enjoyed this and will definitely look for another in the series should there be a 4th book. Thank you to NetGalley and HarperCollins Publishers for the e-book ARC to read and review.

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### **Juli says**

Dark Waters is the third book in the Alex Devlin series. This is the first book in the series that I've read...and I'm glad I did. This is an enjoyable mystery with an interesting plot and some dark surprises. Well-written and nicely paced, it made for a very enjoyable evening of reading. I got to bed quite past my usual time because I couldn't put this book down. Worth it!

Two men are found dead on a rented boat in the Norfolk Broads. Local investigators say the men were killed by carbon monoxide poisoning. The deaths appear to be suicide. Alex is a reporter and jumps at the chance to cover the case for The Post. Why would a wealthy businessman and a former priest commit suicide

together? The case goes down a dark path involving internet suicide forums, dark secrets and revenge. It turns out that 40-year old secrets might be closer to home than Alex realizes.

I like Alex Devlin as a main character. She is intelligent, self-reliant and feisty. She's totally dedicated to getting the story and investigating, even when the situation gets dangerous. Her family and work relationships are complex and complicated, but that just makes the character seem more realistic.

I definitely enjoyed this book! This is the first book by Mary-Jane Riley that I've read. I will definitely be back-tracking to read the first two books in this series!

\*\*I voluntarily read an advance readers copy of this book from HarperImpulse via NetGalley. All opinions expressed are entirely my own.\*\*

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### **Paula says**

Wow! This was great! I got an ARC from Netgalley of this book. It's the first I've read of the Alex Devlin series and the first by Mary-Jane Riley. I will say I thought I had it figured out early on who the "bad guy" was, but no, Riley surprised me! She kept the twists and turns going all the way to the end. I was definitely intrigued to keep reading and see what happened! I was a bit confused with the chapters that changed narrators and went back in time. I just had to go back and reread those once I figured out what was going on. That's the only part I couldn't understand what was going on. Once I caught on, I loved it!! Great book!!

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### **Jennifer says**

Perfectly good holiday read, 3.5-4, really. I might seek out the first two in the series although I fear I may know the outcome of the first one now...

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### **Katherine Sunderland says**

Although this is book three, it can be read as a stand alone. There is an overriding story arc running through the novels but as with any good writer, Riley finds the perfect balance, making sure you are either filled in with any necessary back story or reminded of any key details you might need to know. However, I would recommend you went back to the first two books if you have a chance, as I really enjoyed meeting the characters again and seeing how Riley decided to continue to develop their story lines.

I think the thing I like the most about Dark Waters is Alex's character. She's a fantastic protagonist and, as I said, I was pleased to meet her again. As a journalist she has a determination to search out the truth and seek answers but without the restrictions or same protocol as a police officer. She's likeable, relatable, fallible, with enough emotional complication to make her interesting and engaging without becoming too contrived or pitiable.

The location of the story is so precisely created that it is easy to feel as if you are in Norfolk, and then Cambridge when the story slips back to the 1970s. I really enjoyed the interweaving of a secondary thread from the past. It helped to add further intrigue and layers to the mystery as well as creating a good contrast with the very modern issues of the internet which are explored in the main story line.

Riley's writing is very fluent and you'll find yourself swept along with this thrilling mystery very easily. There are plenty of characters - all well defined and significant - and plenty of twists and turns that keep you guessing as the plot delves deeper, uncovering darker, more hidden, secrets.

If you haven't met Alex Devlin yet then now is the time! I recommend you make a start with *Dark Waters* and treat yourself to a truly compelling crime thriller from an accomplished writer who certainly understands the genre and how to keep her readers turning the pages until they get to the very last line.

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### **Aleasha says**

I'm beginning to really loath these books that seem to all have the same format - journalist who is taking a break from journalism that somehow stumbles into a murder investigation and in turn then thinks they are detectives. Really boring and not at all my cup of tea - especially with characters like these.

Thank you to the publisher for an ARC in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Jen says**

Anyone who knows me, knows that for my day job I travel all over the country. Not everyday, but enough to make things interesting, Before I had the National gig I was a regional Manager for over five years and my patch, 'The Midlands' stretched from Exeter to Norwich - don't ask! Now I always find myself drawn to books which are set in areas I know and while I don't have a great knowledge of the Broads, I do know Norfolk and the premise of the book really intrigued me so I was delighted to join the tour.

Well, I must say, what a book. On her way to visit her parents, journalist Alex Devlin happens upon a newly discovered crime scene and her natural investigative instincts are immediately ignited. Even more so when she discovers the identity of one of the two victims. Now the police are quick to write the whole thing off as a suicide, the circumstances, including notes to family members making the case seemingly open and shut. But Alex is not so easily convinced and refuses to let things lie. Her investigations lead her to places well beyond her expectations and put her directly in the sights of a killer.

Exciting stuff indeed. Now I love when a book looks at a crime from a slightly different angle and who better to do that than a journalist? They can get in places the police perhaps can't due to process and procedure, ask the awkward questions and visit the sites that are prohibited without the presence of a warrant. And Alex does all of this and more, always just that half a step ahead of the investigating officers, Berry and Logan. Yes. You read that right.

I really liked Alex. She is pretty grounded person and yet she is not without her family issues. Her father suffers early onset dementia and hardly recognises her half of the time, her son is miles away spending time getting to know his biological father and her sister ... Well I won't give any spoilers but let's mark their relationship as 'complicated', her sister's story both harrowing and worrying at the same time. And yet, in spite of the concerns she has for her family, Alex is determined, tenacious and committed to getting to the truth of the story, no matter the consequences, and believe me when I say they could be pretty dire.

Mary-Jane Riley has done a great job of setting the scene for the reader. There can't be that many of us overly familiar with the Broads and the boats and barges that traverse them, and yet she has created enough of a sense of place to be able to picture them and place yourself in the heart of the action. There are also scenes set in 1970's Cambridge University which inform the main story. Recreating that time, of the characters who inhabited that world and the sense of entitlement that they eschewed, certainly from one or two of the less likeable characters, has been done really well and you can feel the authenticity of devil-may-care attitude and the madness of their actions.

While this is not the most fast paced read, it is after all centred around the apparent joint suicide of two seemingly unconnected people who met on an internet forum, it still captured my imagination as a reader. The quality of the writing made me want to read on and Alex is a character I became invested in very early on. I should advise that this is the third book in the series and while it may give some element of spoilers to the previous books (I am only guessing there) I don't think it would be enough to stop you reading this as a stand alone. There were moments towards the end that had me on the edge of my seat, the tension slowly building throughout until a final showdown with a very dangerous man. There were also intriguing threads littered throughout which kept the reader guessing until the end, such as whose was the mysterious voice recounting the days at Cambridge?

And if there is one other thing which drew me into the book it is Heath Maitland, Alex's colleague on the paper she was freelancing for. He is a brilliant character, plays perfectly off Alex, and there is that spark there between them which is irresistible. Given the way in which this book ends, I can't wait to see where this relationship is taken next.

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## **Christina McDonald says**

Freelance journalist Alex feels like she's stagnating since she left London, so when she hears a story on the news about two men who've been discovered dead in an apparent suicide pact, she's desperate to sink her teeth into a good story and decides to investigate.

I didn't know prior to reading this book that there were two previous Alex Devlin books, so I found all of the teasers a bit confusing: her sister, her sister's past, her ex-boyfriend, etc. It seemed like there were too many back stories going on, and when I got to the end it felt like they hadn't been tied up. However, it all made sense when I found out this was the third book.

The story is well structured, although there isn't a lot of descriptive writing to grasp onto, and I found it hard to get a read on Alex, the protagonist. It would've helped if she'd had some interior 'why' she wanted to research the story up front, rather than just that 'she's a journalist'.

You'll enjoy this book if you like easy-to-read, plot-driven novels with a dark plot exploring topics such as suicide, mental health and murder.



Thank you to NetGalley for letting me read this book in exchange for my unbiased opinion.

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### **Susan Hampson says**

I was totally blown away with the first two books in this series that centre round Alex Devlin and spiders out into her family. Now with the hustle and bustle of London behind her as she has returned to Sole Bay to give a hand to her mum, who is looking after her father that has the tell tale signs of dementia. She is close enough to call in but far enough away to get on with her own life too.

Working as a free-lance journalist she accidentally stumbles across what appears at first to have been a double suicide but with a little digging she soon gets the feeling that this story will go big. Well she would be daft to turn down potential easy money if she can loosen tongues before anyone gets a whiff of the story. The more she digs and the bigger the hole gets and the only trouble with holes is that you can fall up to your neck in them yourself!

Oh my words have this family had it rough in the past and it seems like what they gain in one hand is taken away with the other. I did love the return of one of the main characters from the first book, no more said on that one though except to really get the full impact of this family dynamics read all three books because references are made back to past events that are too vague to grasp exactly what has gone off. The story dips back into the past as Alex pieces it together like a jigsaw but with all old jig-saws there is always that one vital piece missing.

It may start off at a steady pace on the peaceful Norfolk Broads but by heck buckle up because when it picks up speed it doesn't slow down. There are some real touching scenes and life changing acceptances for the whole family to come to terms with. The last page though made it a perfect read for me. It felt right. That made it cracking writing. A superb book again!

Thank you to NetGalley for my e-copy which I have reviewed honestly

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### **Rina Najman says**

#### **Very Tense**

This was my first book by Ms. Riley and I enjoyed it a lot. I felt myself getting a bit antsy y in the middle with so many twisted and turns and more unanswered questions than my brain could wrap around. I typed with skimming to get to the end, but I'm glad I didn't since even the tidy ending had more twists revealed than had been expected.

Well done. I'll be reading more by Ms. Riley.

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