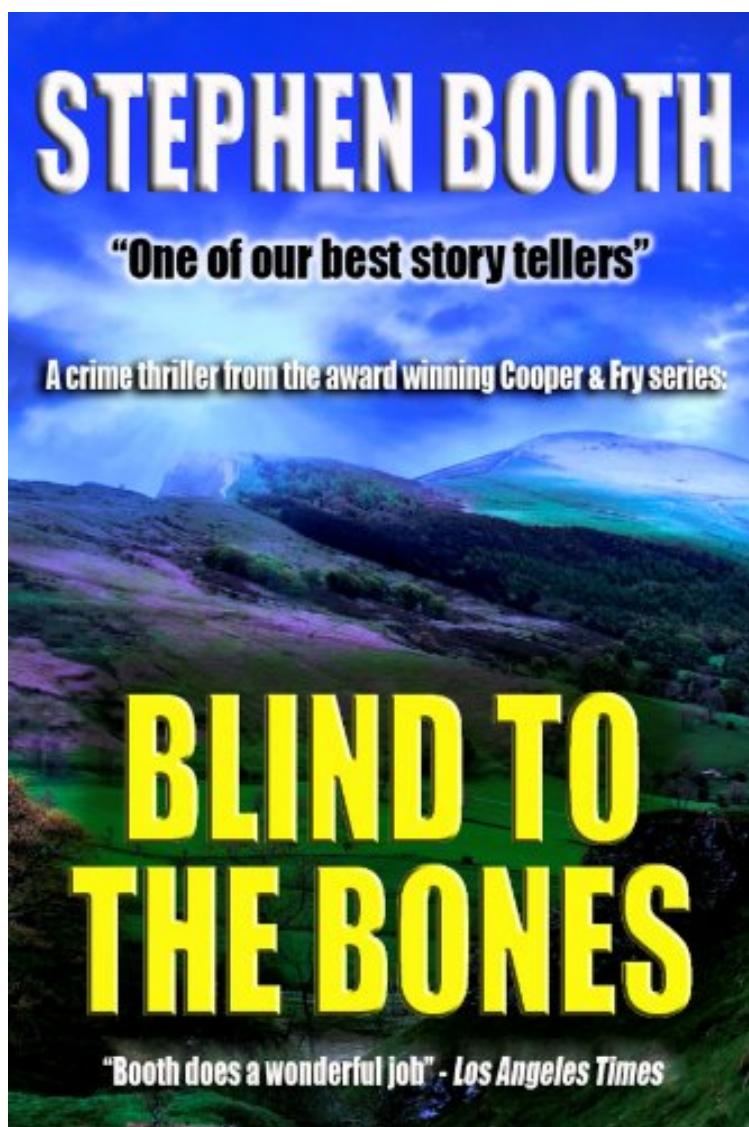


[Read free ebook] File size: 49.Mb

# Blind to the Bones (Ben Cooper Diane Fry) (English Edition)



*Par Stephen Booth*  
audiobook | \*ebooks | Download PDF |  
ePub | DOC

Dtails sur le produit Rang parmi les  
ventes : #168732 dans eBooksPubli le:  
2014-01-26Sorti le: 2014-01-26Format:  
Ebook Kindle

[Read free ebook] Blind to the Bones  
(Ben Cooper Diane Fry) (English Edition)

**Par Stephen Booth : Blind to the Bones  
(Ben Cooper Diane Fry) (English Edition)**  
before purchasing it in order to gage whether  
or not it would be worth my time, and all  
praised Blind to the Bones (Ben Cooper  
Diane Fry) (English Edition):

Download

Read Online

## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteur'And as it grew dark, Withens became almost entirely silent. Except for the screaming.'It's nearly May Day, and deep in the Dark Peak lies the village of Withens. A young man has been killed - battered to death and left high on the desolate moors for the crows to find. Derbyshire detective DC Ben Cooper meets an impenetrable wall of silence from the man's relatives who form Withens' oldest family, the Oxleys, descendants of the first workers who tunnelled beneath the Peak. They stick to their own area, pass on secret knowledge through the generations, and guard their traditions from outsiders. Meanwhile, DS Diane Fry is in Withens on other business - looking into the disappearance of Emma

Renshaw. The student vanished into thin air two years ago, but her parents are convinced she is still alive and act accordingly... which doesn't help Fry in her efforts to re-open the case following an ominous discovery in remote countryside. But there are other secrets in Withens and more violence to come. The past is stretching its shadow over the present, not just for the inhabitants of Withens but for Cooper and Fry as well. The darkness in the heart of Withens is growing. And things are only going to get nastier.

**BLIND TO THE BONES** is the 4th novel in the multiple award-winning Cooper Fry series, set in England's beautiful and atmospheric Peak District.\* Nominated for the Theakston's Crime Novel of the Year Award 2004\* A top 50 paperback bestseller in the UK\* A number 8 bestseller for the Independent Mystery Booksellers in the USA\* A number 1 hardback bestseller for the UK's leading mystery bookstore, Crime in Store\* A Hot 100 bestseller for .co.uk in hardcover\* In 2003, Stephen Booth was the winner of the Dagger in the Library award, presented by the Crime Writers Association for the author whose books have given readers the most pleasure

**PRAISE FOR THE COOPER AND FRY SERIES:**"Suspenseful and supremely engaging. Booth does a wonderful job." - Los Angeles Times"Simultaneously classic, contemporary and haunting." - Otto Penzler, Mysterious Bookshop, New York"Stephen Booth makes high summer in Derbyshire as dark and terrifying as midwinter." - Val McDermid, award-winning crime novelist"Intelligent and substantive crime fiction, rich with complex characters." - Library Journal"Booth has firmly joined the elite of Britain's top mystery writers." - Florida Sun-Sentinel"Crime fiction for the thinking man or woman, and damnably hard to put down." - January Magazine"Highly recommended - a great series!" - Seattle Mystery Bookstore"Ben Cooper and Diane Fry are the most interesting crime team to arrive on the mystery scene in a long while." -

Rocky Mountain News"One of our best story tellers." - Sunday Telegraph"There are few, if any, contemporary writers who do this as well as Stephen Booth." - Arena magazine"Booth is a modern master of rural noir." - The Guardian"Booth delivers some of the best crime fiction in the UK." - Manchester Evening News"Stephen Booth has to be one of the best new English mystery writers." - Toadstool Bookshop, New

Hampshire"Booth's aim is to portray the darkness that lies below the surface... in this he succeeds wonderfully well." - Mark Billingham, author of the DI Tom Thorne series"If you read only one new crime writer this year, he's your man." - Yorkshire Post

Chapter One

Friday

As soon as he opened the door, he could hear the screaming. It ripped through the damp air and shrieked in the yews. It echoed from the gravestones and died against the walls. It was like the sound of an animal, dying in pain. Yet this sound was human. With every breath he took, Derek Alton seemed to draw the noise into his own lungs with the air, until something like an answering scream came from deep inside him. The asthmatic wheeze of his inflamed air passages was so high-pitched that his ears couldn't locate its direction, but identified it as a noise that came from the air around him. The pain in his upper chest told him where that noise came from. And Alton knew where the screaming came from, too. With shaking fingers, he brushed some of the dust from his sleeve. He rubbed at a fresh scratch on his knuckles, but managed only to smear a streak of blood across the back of his hand. He could taste dust in his mouth, too old dust, the debris of years, stirred into the air by a random act of violence. The screaming reminded Alton of the shriek of agony he had once heard from a rat, when a terrier had flushed it from its nest in a barn and its back had been broken under a farmer's spade. The dying rat had squealed with its last strength, as its legs kicked and its pale claws clutched and uncoiled in the dry earth. Now he waited, expecting to hear other noises. At first, there was only the stirring of the breeze in the yews and the drip of rainwater from the ivy on the church walls. But gradually he began to distinguish something else a rhythmic thudding. It reverberated inside a room some distance away, well beyond the first houses on the road into Withens. It was like a ritual drumbeat, folding over on itself and creating multiple

layers of sound. He shivered as he recognized the undertones of menace, which spoke of imminent death. Then there was a burst of laughter somewhere in the village, followed by the slam of a door. A female voice shouted something that Alton couldn't make out. It was just one sentence, half a dozen words, and then the voice was gone. Farther away, an ewe called to its lambs on the slopes of Withens Moor, where the hefted flocks still roamed their territories on the heather and peat bog. Alton had seen Withens Moor. He had seen Black Hill and Hey Moss, too. And he knew the moors themselves were dying. Death had been on Derek Alton's mind all day. He had awoken with a jolt in the early hours of the morning, panicking that he might have disturbed Caroline with one of his bad dreams. But as soon as he opened his eyes, he realized that his mind had been banging back and forth like a pendulum, swinging between the distant dualities of darkness and light, winter and spring, death and renewal. He might have been thinking of the end of winter and the first invasion of spring. But, mostly, he was sure he had been thinking of death. Alton heard footsteps approaching through the aisle of the church. There were no carpets in St. Asaph's, and his visitor was

wearing heavy work boots that thumped on the stone flags. He turned back toward the nave and squinted at the figure moving slowly out of the light to stand beside him. Once they were standing close together, the porch of the church seemed far too small. Neil Granger was wearing a black leather jacket of the kind that Alton thought of as motorcyclist's gear, though he knew Neil didn't have a motorbike, only the old Volkswagen Beetle he used for getting to and from his job at the Lancashire Chemicals factory in Glossop, fifteen miles to the west. He looked very tired. "You might as well go, Neil," said Alton. "You can't do any more here tonight." Neil had sweat running from his temples into the black smudges on his cheeks. He wiped a hand down the side of his face, spreading the smudges even more. But he looked at Alton with concern when he heard his wheezing. "Are you sure you're all right?" "I'm fine," said Alton. "I just needed some fresh air. And we ought not to do any more until the police have been to take a look." "Don't hold your breath, then. They might get here next Easter." "I know, I know. But all the same . . ." "You want to do things by the rules." Alton sighed. "I wish there were still rules for this kind of thing." "You like rules, don't you? It goes with the job, I suppose." "Well, there are the Ten Commandments." But Alton smiled to show that he knew it was a joke. "In Withens?" said Neil. "Yes, even in Withens." "I think you'll find they've broken all the tablets of stone." A few feet away, a blackbird scuttled into the undergrowth over the horizontal gravestones that lay like fallen monoliths in front of the church. The blackbirds were always the last to go to their roosts in the dusk. Neil flapped the lapels of his jacket to fan his face. Alton could smell his sweat, and he felt a surge of affection and gratitude toward the young man for taking the trouble to stop by and help. Not many people would have done that. Not in Withens. "I appreciate what you've done, Neil," he said. But instead of acknowledging Alton's thanks, Neil turned his face away, staring out into the churchyard. "Vicar," he said, "I'm sorry." "What for?" said Alton, surprised. Neil waved a hand vaguely toward the village. "Well, all this. It's not what you expected, is it? Not what you deserve, really, I suppose." "I don't know what you mean, Neil." Neil laughed, then coughed as the dust got into his throat. Alton caught the glitter of the rings in his ear and the sheen of his black hair. He wanted to put his hand round the young man's shoulder and tell him it was all right. Whatever Neil was apologizing for, it was perfectly all right. But he hesitated, worrying that the gesture might be misinterpreted, then cursing himself for being so cautious. He ought to be able to give forgiveness, if that was what Neil Granger needed. But by the time the reactions had run through his brain, the moment had passed, and it was too late. In any case, Neil immediately seemed to have forgotten what he had been saying, and his mood changed again. "Well, like I said, we'll tackle the churchyard this weekend." "Yes," said Alton. "We'll do that." "I was hoping Philip would help us, but he's being mardy about it." "Your brother is busy these days. I understand." "Some new business he's got involved in. I don't know what he's up to anymore. But we'll get it sorted between the two of us, eh? Remember, Vicar death and renewal, winter and spring." "The darkness and the light." "That's it. Time for a bit of light on the subject, I reckon." Neil turned to look at the vicar then, but Alton could barely see his eyes. They, too, were dark, and they were at the wrong angle to catch the light leaking into the porch from the nave. Alton couldn't tell what expression was on Neil's face. But a strange thought ran through his mind. If he had been able to read Neil's eyes at that moment, he might not have seen any expression at all, only a reflection of the gravestones outside in the churchyard. "I've got to be up early in the morning, anyway," said Neil. Alton nodded. "Do you remember, the year before last?" But Neil held up a hand before Alton could finish his question. "I don't even want to think about it," he said. "Two years ago, Emma should have been there." "Of course. I'm sorry." "It's all right. I suppose it seems a long time ago now, for most people. I don't expect everybody to remember." "But I do remember," said Alton. "And there are her parents, of course." "Oh, her parents remember," said Neil. Because of the failing light, Alton could see little beyond the wall of the churchyard now, except the streetlights in Withens. He was sure it wasn't Caroline's voice he had heard in the village earlier. Perhaps it had been that of Fran Oxley, or even Lorraine, or one of the other members of the Oxley family. But it definitely wasn't Caroline. She would never laugh like that, or shout so loudly in public. At this moment, Caroline would be walking past the Old Rectory, averting her eyes from the house and garden until she could turn into the crescent and reach their bungalow. Somewhere in the darkness beyond the streetlights was Waterloo Terrace, where the Oxleys lived. Alton could picture the eight brick cottages, tightly packed like a row of soldiers, standing shoulder to shoulder against the larger stone buildings that clustered around them. Derek Alton and Neil Granger stood in the church porch a few moments longer, listening to the noises from the village. The screaming faded, then grew louder again. "Does that sound like a rat to you?" said Neil. "Yes, it does." Neil nodded. "Okay, then." He rubbed at his face as he began to walk away down the flagged path. His clothes rustled like the sound of the blackbird in the dead leaves. Alton lifted his head for a

second to look toward the village. And when he turned back, he found that Neil had already disappeared into the darkness beyond the yew trees. Later, Derek Alton would have a lot to regret. He would be sorry that he hadn't watched Neil Granger leave, and hadn't observed the moment when the young man passed out of his sight. Perhaps he could have called Neil back and said something that might have changed his mind. But he hadn't. Alton had been too distracted by the noise coming from the village, and too absorbed in his own concerns. He would feel guilty for that, too. But most of all, Derek Alton would regret not saying good-bye.\*\*\*

There were ten more dead bodies to collect that night. Others had probably died underground, or had been trapped deep in the spaces between the stone arches and the hillside behind them. But Sandy Norton wasn't satisfied. "We're going to have to put more poison down," he said. "The buggers are breeding like, well""Rats?""Yeah." Norton shone his torch into the mouth of the middle portal. It was one of the nineteenth-century tunnels, the old westbound line, which wasn't used for anything these days. The railway track had long since been ripped up, and the tunnel abandoned. The arched walls glistened with water, and a small stream ran into a stone conduit near his feet. Just beyond the limit of his torch beam, there were shadowy, scurrying movements on the dirt floor. "It makes you wonder what they find to eat," said his mate Jeff Cade, as he took off his rubber gloves and put them away in a pocket of his overalls. "I mean, aren't they supposed to live near people? You're never more than six feet away from a rat, and all that? But there are no houses around here anymore." Norton laughed. "That's no problem. Look up there, where the old station and platforms used to be. You see that car park and the picnic area, right? Well, that's like a drive-in McDonald's as far as these little buggers are concerned. Just think there's all the food that people leave on the grass when they've been having their picnics, and all the bits of sandwiches and chocolate bars, and God knows what, that they chuck out of their car windows. There's thousands of people coming past here, especially at the weekend, ever since they turned the old railway line into a footpath." "It's called the Longdendale Trail. I know." "And then there's the road up there the A628. Have you ever seen how much stuff lorry drivers bung out of their cabs? You can't walk along the roadside up there without getting splattered with lumps of flying pork pie and pasties. It's disgusting. Not to mention the cabs in the lay-bys. The bins are overflowing with rubbish up there sometimes." "I suppose you're right." "No, there might not be people living here anymore. But the whole world comes by to feed the rats in Longdendale." "It's a good job they can't get to the cables in the other tunnel. They can gnaw their way through anything, given time, can rats." "We need some more poison, anyway," said Norton. A few yards away, in the old eastbound tunnel, a pair of four-hundred-thousand volt cables ran through a concrete trough. The cables entered the tunnel three miles away at Dunford Bridge, carrying a section of the National Grid between Yorkshire and Manchester. As they emerged again at Woodhead, they ran past a relay room, then up into a series of giant pylons that marched down the valley toward Manchester. The abandoned Woodhead tunnels had saved the moors from being covered in pylons for those three miles. Sandy Norton had often admired the quality of the stonework in the tunnel arches, which had survived in good condition for more than a hundred and fifty years. But their present use was one the navvies who built the tunnels couldn't have imagined as they hacked their way through the hill with their pickaxes and gunpowder. In fact, those navvies wouldn't even have been able to imagine the newer two-track tunnel to the south, which had been cut in the 1950s and accommodated the country's first electrified rail line. That tunnel was empty, too, now. Apart from the little battery-powered locomotive that ran on the maintenance track in the National Grid cableway, the last trains had run through the Woodhead tunnels over twenty years ago. Norton and Cade were packing up to leave the site when a car slowed and stopped on the road overhead. They heard it pull onto the bare concrete pad where a house had once stood above the tunnel entrances, but which was now no more than a pull-in for a good view down the valley. After a few moments, the car started up again and drove off. "That was an old Volkswagen Beetle," said Norton. "How do you know that?" "I recognize the sound of the engine. It's distinctive air-cooled, you know. I used to have a Beetle myself years ago, when I was a lad." "Have we finished with these rats, then?" "For now," said Norton. He turned off his torch. "You know, I wouldn't like to walk through this tunnel in the dark." Cade shuddered. "Me neither. Three miles in the dark? No thanks. It'd be bad enough, even without the rats." He turned back toward their van. But Norton didn't follow him immediately. He was looking up at the stones over the arch of the tunnel mouth. He'd once been told that the navvies who built the old tunnels had been superstitious men. They were convinced that their tunneling had disturbed something deep in the hill, which had been the cause of all the disasters that happened to them--the tragedies that had earned Woodhead the nickname "Railwaymen's Graveyard." Norton had heard that when the navvies had finished tunneling, their final act had been to carve faces at each of the tunnel entrances to control the evil

spirits. But if the carvings were still there, they were so worn now that he couldn't make them out. Sandy Norton shrugged. He didn't know about evil spirits. But the faces hadn't done much to control the rats. Finally, he locked the steel gate that prevented unauthorized access to the middle tunnel. All three tunnels had their own gates. Without them, rail enthusiasts and others who were even less welcome would always be trying to get into the tunnels. Some of those folk would want to walk all three miles to the other end, just to prove they could do it. They wouldn't be bothered by the rats. They wouldn't take any notice of the risk from the high-voltage power cables. They wouldn't even be deterred by the National Grid's yellow-and-black signs on the gates. The meaning of the signs was clear enough, with their symbol of a black lightning bolt cutting through a body. It was clear even without their message, which read: danger of death. Presentation de l'diteur' And as it grew dark, Withens became almost entirely silent. Except for the screaming. It's nearly May Day, and deep in the Dark Peak lies the village of Withens. A young man has been killed - battered to death and left high on the desolate moors for the crows to find. Derbyshire detective DC Ben Cooper meets an impenetrable wall of silence from the man's relatives who form Withens' oldest family, the Oxleys, descendants of the first workers who tunnelled beneath the Peak. They stick to their own area, pass on secret knowledge through the generations, and guard their traditions from outsiders. Meanwhile, DS Diane Fry is in Withens on other business - looking into the disappearance of Emma Renshaw. The student vanished into thin air two years ago, but her parents are convinced she is still alive and act accordingly... which doesn't help Fry in her efforts to re-open the case following an ominous discovery in remote countryside. But there are other secrets in Withens and more violence to come. The past is stretching its shadow over the present, not just for the inhabitants of Withens but for Cooper and Fry as well. The darkness in the heart of Withens is growing. And things are only going to get nastier.

**BLIND TO THE BONES** is the 4th novel in the multiple award-winning Cooper Fry series, set in England's beautiful and atmospheric Peak District. \* Nominated for the Theakston's Crime Novel of the Year Award 2004\* A top 50 paperback bestseller in the UK\* A number 8 bestseller for the Independent Mystery Booksellers in the USA\* A number 1 hardback bestseller for the UK's leading mystery bookstore, Crime in Store\* A Hot 100 bestseller for .co.uk in hardcover\* In 2003, Stephen Booth was the winner of the Dagger in the Library award, presented by the Crime Writers Association for the author whose books have given readers the most pleasure

**PRAISE FOR THE COOPER AND FRY SERIES:** "Suspenseful and supremely engaging. Booth does a wonderful job." - Los Angeles Times "Simultaneously classic, contemporary and haunting." - Otto Penzler, Mysterious Bookshop, New York "Stephen Booth makes high summer in Derbyshire as dark and terrifying as midwinter." - Val McDermid, award-winning crime novelist "Intelligent and substantive crime fiction, rich with complex characters." - Library Journal "Booth has firmly joined the elite of Britain's top mystery writers." - Florida Sun-Sentinel "Crime fiction for the thinking man or woman, and damnably hard to put down." - January Magazine "Highly recommended - a great series!" - Seattle Mystery Bookstore "Ben Cooper and Diane Fry are the most interesting crime team to arrive on the mystery scene in a long while." - Rocky Mountain News "One of our best story tellers." - Sunday Telegraph "There are few, if any, contemporary writers who do this as well as Stephen Booth." - Arena magazine "Booth is a modern master of rural noir." - The Guardian "Booth delivers some of the best crime fiction in the UK." - Manchester Evening News "Stephen Booth has to be one of the best new English mystery writers." - Toadstool Bookshop, New Hampshire "Booth's aim is to portray the darkness that lies below the surface... in this he succeeds wonderfully well." - Mark Billingham, author of the DI Tom Thorne series "If you read only one new crime writer this year, he's your man." - Yorkshire Post