



Close to the Bone

Stuart MacBride

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The first body is chained to a stake: strangled, and stabbed, with a burning tyre around its neck. But is this a gangland execution or something much darker?

Someone's leaving little knots of bones outside Detective Inspector Logan McRae's house, but he's got more pressing things to worry about. Rival drug gangs are fighting over product and territory; two teenage lovers are missing; someone's crippling Asian immigrants; and Logan's been lumbered with an ambitious new Detective Sergeant, a mountain of paperwork, and the unwelcome attention of his superiors and the local crime boss.

When another body turns up, it looks as if the similarities between these murders and the plot of a bestselling novel are more than just a coincidence. And perhaps those little knots of bones are more important than they look...

Close to the Bone Details

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Author : Stuart MacBride

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From Reader Review Close to the Bone for online ebook

Sandy *The world could end while I was reading and I would never notice* says

EXCERPT: She holds up the book of matches, licks her lips. She's practised the words a dozen times until they're perfect.

'Do you have anything to say before I carry out sentence?'

The man kneeling on the floor of the warehouse stares up at her. He's trembling, moaning behind the mask hiding his face. 'Oh God. Oh Jesus. Oh God. Oh Jesus.'

The chains around his wrists and ankles rattle against the metal stake.

A waft of accelerant curls through the air from the tyre wedged over his head and shoulders. Black rubber and paraffin.

THE BLURB: The first body is chained to a stake: strangled, and stabbed, with a burning tyre around its neck. But is this a gangland execution or something much darker?

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MY THOUGHTS: The blurb doesn't do Close to the Bone by Stuart MacBride justice, anywhere near justice. Reading this book is a nail-biting, roller-coaster ride of an experience. MacBride has long been a favorite author of mine, but with Close to the Bone, he has taken his writing to a whole new level. This is the best book by this author that I have read.

I have a strong stomach, there isn't much in the written word that makes me cringe, yet MacBride managed it. Amongst all the horrific descriptions of what the characters in this book are doing to one another, the graphic descriptions of the crime scenes and the decomposing bodies, there is a girl who picks the scabs off her knees AND EATS THEM! That brought me to my knees.

And interspersed with all this, are little gems of MacBride's black humor. An example - 'You told me he was dead.' 'He got better.'

I loved this book. MacBride had me running the gamut of my emotions. He shocked me, he had me worried, he made me sad, he made me laugh, he broke my heart.

I listened to Close to the Bone by Stuart MacBride, narrated by Steve Worley who did a magnificent job, on audio via Overdrive. All opinions expressed in this review are entirely my own. Please refer to my Goodreads.com profile page or the 'about' page on sandysbookaday.wordpress.com for an explanation of my rating system. This review and others are also published on my blog sandysbookaday.wordpress.com

Ed says

Hounded by his uber-sarcastic boss, DCI Roberta Steel, Detective Inspector Logan McCrea and his very witty mates pursue a ritualistic killer somehow associated with a horror film production in Aberdeen Scotland. DCI Steel, for example, might be the funniest fictional boss in the English speaking world which of course, begs the question of whether the Scots do indeed, speak English. Just kidding of course. "Tartan Noir" is alive and well, I'm happy to report, thanks to brilliant authors like Stuart MacBride. I think I'm finally getting the hang of the Northeast Scottish brogue and was no' disappointed with the effort!

The plot lines are really secondary and take a back seat to these wonderfully unique characters. Character driven humor is difficult to pull off successfully in fiction; Dan Jenkins, Carl Hiaasen and Christopher Brookmyre come to mind but nobody does sarcasm like Stuart MacBride's truly unforgettable characters in this recurring series.

Rachel the Book Harlot says

4.5 stars

I love this series. Review to come...

Lorraine says

Reading Stuart Macbride is kind of like riding a rollercoaster inside a fun house. Not only do you go up and down at often dizzying and breakneck speeds, but you come face to face with strange characters, mirrors that distort everything and, sometimes, ghosts and weird noises. Acting DI Logan McRae is still living in a "caravan" (aka trailer) after his flat was destroyed by a fire two years ago. Someone is leaving bones tied with ribbon at his front step. He thinks they're just chicken bones until he learns otherwise.... Someone has "necklaced" a homeless veteran of the Kuwait war, tortured him and set him on fire. Meanwhile, a gang war over high grade cannabis is threatening to break out, and a film of a popular book about witches is being filmed in a former porn studio. Macbride is one of the best crime writers out there. His dark humor is twisted beyond belief. There aren't a lot of writers who can make you laugh, be outraged, then cry and laugh again - often in the same paragraph. This is why I NEVER miss the newest Stuart Macbride.

Steve says

4.5 stars

This was one of the better Logan McRae books, and had plenty of twists to keep this reader guessing until the end. The entire series is very good, and I just realized that it is the characters' personalities that have been driving the storylines.

In this latest volume (hopefully not the last!), DI McRae and his crew are tracking down a serial killer that is twisted up into some weird witchcraft based on a best-selling novel/soon-to-be-major-motion-picture. Like I said, plot twists and surprises throughout. And characters reappearing after moving away several books ago were a special treat for the reader, too.

Hoping this isn't the last we see of Logan McRae...

Karen says

Look, let's just admit that I'm a huge fan of this series and get it over and done with. Love DI Steel, love her glorious over the topness, love McRae's constant sooking and all being put upon. Love the madness of the world in which they have to try to operate as functioning police members, love the supporting cast, love the gallows humour. Love the whole damn thing. Even love those that don't quite live up to the other books in the series (and let's face it - we're talking bees d's worth of not living up to that which came before).

I'll therefore plead to some lacking in objectivity.

CLOSE TO THE BONE has the requisite things going pear-shaped left right and centre - with cases piling up at the door refusing to maintain an orderly line. Including McRae balancing a personal life that almost, in the last book, accidentally veered towards normal, committed and stable. Meanwhile Steele is behaving like everyone's worst nightmare caricature. Even more-so in this book as she's dragged kicking, screaming, bitching and moaning into "Management". I even, for a very brief period in my life, found myself interested in the outcome of a wildly popular paranormal novel, but only because it looks like some nutcase is basing a series of murders on scenarios from that book.

But, more importantly, underneath the lunacy and the caricature there are little ripples in the reality. Sure Steel is considerably more over the top in the book than she's been in others. Maybe because the idea of Management scares her more than babies, shared parenthood and responsibility. Okay so McRae seems to be playing a slightly straighter bat on the one hand, and yet, maybe this settling down thing has some complications that he's not being completely up front about.

With MacBride there's often been that thing in the undercurrent, that hint of the reality underneath the gallows humour and that glimpse behind the mask that's intriguing. That and the over the top nature of the characters as a coping mechanism for what they must deal with on a day to day basis. Sure in this book some of those elements are stretched out to the point where you can actually see through the elastic. Don't care. Loved it.

<http://www.austcrimefiction.org/reviews/2013/07/close-to-the-bone-by-joan-mcrae>

Phrynne says

Oh I did enjoy this one! I think that as I become more accustomed to the Scottish slang and the black, black humour I like this series more and more.

Logan McRae is still in a bad place domestically but at least his work life is looking up. As he tries to juggle

solving several different crimes at the same time and deal with his (appalling) boss he manages to maintain his cool - mostly- and gets the job done.

A great story, grotesque murders, lots of blood and chaos, really dark humour - I loved all of it!

Neil says

This was book 8 in the Logan McRae series, and once again Logan finds himself up to his neck in various crimes. There are gangland style killings, another drugs war seems to be breaking out, missing down and outs, a missing teenager, several oriental men have turned up with shattered knees, and the body count keeps rising. Are the gangland style killings a smoke screen for other darker satanic ritualistic murders, or is someone trying to move the focus away from what is really going on?

At the same time a big film is being made in Aberdeen, based around a fantasy book, and some of the killings bear a striking similarity to scenes from the book. Props and things have been stolen from the filmset, and the filmcrew are being pestered. Throw in some good old fashioned witchcraft, and it is easy to see why Logan is getting swamped. The investigations seem to be getting nowhere so a team from Strathclyde are sent in to assist, included in their number is Jackie Watson, Logan's one time girlfriend. His present girlfriend is still in the hospital from the arson attack on their flat in the previous book.

While DCI Finnie is away Steel has temporarily been promoted to cover for him, and Logan finds himself as an acting DI. So now not only does he have crimes to solve, there is the added problem of mountains of paperwork and budgets to be looked after.

Insch also puts in a welcome return, alongside the introduction of several new characters. The plots do seem to get slightly tangled and confusing in places, but the reader is led along in such a way that everything eventually makes sense. Despite the confusion a book worth reading, although it might not make complete sense to someone who hasn't read the earlier books in the series.

Siobhan says

I adore all of the Logan McRae novels, each book pushing Stuart MacBride higher up on my list of favourite authors. In fact, there are only a couple of authors I rate above Stuart MacBride – and those are my cream of the crop authors. Thus, whenever I see a story with his name on the cover, I jump at the book. Any book that belongs to the Logan McRae series is grabbed even quicker. Whilst I was late joining the McRae party, I'm well and truly an adoring fan.

Close to the Bone was another fun addition to the Logan McRae series, although I didn't enjoy it as much as I've enjoyed some of the others. In fact, at times the story seemed to really drag. Yes, there were many wonderful aspects. Everything you would expect from Stuart MacBride could be seen; however, it wasn't quite what some of the other books happened to be.

Truthfully, I think I know what did it for me. The last few books have seen more and more of the psychologist nosing his way into things (or being pulled into things, depending upon how you look at things). I enjoy his character, I really do. There was too much of him here, though. Now many will find he adds a lot to the story – yet I found myself unable to suspend belief in the way I needed to. Well, not so much suspend belief as ignore the reality of my world. You see, I belong to the psychology department at the University of Aberdeen, thus allowing me to know how the department works. The layout of the building,

the way things played out, and all the other small things meant I wasn't as pulled into the story as I could have been. As I should have been. I found myself going 'nope, not correct' every time something came about which I knew the truth about. Now throughout the series I have loved reading about a city I know well – however, I found it jarring to suddenly be inside of a building I knew well, and trying to input the story into the small setting. Such a thing will not have an impact on other readers, but it was off putting for me.

Thus, I blame my lack of enjoyment on being too close to the setting.

It wasn't just that, though. The above is an entirely personal thing, which I tried to prevent from influencing my enjoyment of the book. After all, it wasn't as though the entire book took place inside of the building I know so well. In fact, very little happened. It's just the thing that stuck with me most. What did influence me into viewing this as one of my least favourite in the series was how long it took me to become pulled into the story. There were times when things seemed to drag. As always, a lot was going on – and yet I wasn't enjoying things as I usually was. I wanted to know how things came together, and yet I wasn't crazy excited about any single aspect of the story. Some aspects were more fun than other aspects – but, as a whole, things simple were. I'm really not sure what it was: I simply wasn't as engaged as I usually am.

There was still plenty of the usual MacBride marks to be seen: the dark humour, the interwoven stories, and the gritty crime. It just wasn't my favourite of the series.

I'm positive, however, that I will adore the next. After all, the Logan McRae series has become one of my favourite series.

David Highton says

Logan is now an acting DI but still has a fairly chaotic personal life (cannot say more without being a spoiler). This is the eighth in the series and as dark as any of the others - even though I thought it was too long for the plot and the twist in the end a little weak, still a good read. I look forward to the next one.

MadProfessah says

One of the better entries in the DS Logan McRae series by Duncan MacBride, although one feature of this grisly, amusing detective thriller series set in Aberdeen is its consistently high quality.

MacBride seems to like taking on various aspects of society and in CLOSE TO THE BONE he dissects both Hollywood star-crushes and the whole young adult magical fantasy craze. A series of truly horrifying murders are taking place while the movie adaptation of the popular WITCHFIRE book is being filmed around town. Plus there seems to be some kind of incipient gang war between rival marijuana suppliers. And a teenage girl who gets violent when she's off her anti-psychotic meds and her villainous American-raised boyfriend have disappeared.

These are the mysteries that Logan has to deal with this time, except he's also saddled with a (temporary) promotion to Detective Inspector while his torturous (and wildly inappropriate) boss Roberta Steel is now Detective Chief Inspector In charge of the entirety of Major Crimes and still determined to have Logan do most of her job while insuring he do his as well. But the most serious thing is that 2 years have passed since

the events of the previous book. Logan's girlfriend Samantha is still in the hospital and he's living in her old caravan, despite the fact that there's been more than enough time to repair the apartment that was firebombed (which was the incident that led to both their injuries in the first place). He visits her every night but something seems off....

MacBride is a master at combining multiple seemingly unrelated plot threads into a compelling and thrilling police procedural which is both funny and intriguing and he does some of his best work in **CLOSE TO THE BONE**.

I've already started pacing myself in reading the books because there's only 2 more left in the Logan McRae series to date. However I am very pleased that last year a stand-alone book featuring DCI Roberta Steel (**NOW WE ARE DEAD**) was released so there's always that to be look forward to!

Roy says

When I had finished this one, I remember saying I'm done with Logan. The style, plot and characters just had expired for me. However as soon as the newest Macbride came out, I'd purchase and read it. A lot of plot threads in this one. I remember the ending shaking me up a little bit. Didn't expect a character plot twist (no spoilers).

Mike Gabor says

I'm not going to go into the plot of this book, it's a good one, trust me. This series is all about the characters. We have DCI Steel. An over the top woman if there ever was one. The dialogue between her and McRae will leave you laughing for ages. Then there's DS Rennie. A put upon soul if there ever was one, at least according to him. DS Chalmers, an up and coming young detective who is the bane of Rennie's existence. And of course the various villians, all of whom have a rather complicated relationship with McRae. And of course the main character, DI Logan McRae. You really have to start out with the first book in this series and work your way thru the series to get an understanding of McRae. The man has been shot, stabbed, nailed to a floor, made to eat human flesh and various other things. He also seems to get beaten up on a fairly regular basis.

Do yourself a favor and start reading this series. You will not regret it in the least.

Katerina says

3.5

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Kate says

4.5*
