



Shadow of the Hangman

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In this first instalment of the Bow Street Rivals series a riot breaks out in Dartmoor prison, enabling some American inmates to escape. The twin detectives Peter and Paul Skillen catch wind of a projected assassination but the target is unknown. Trouble ensues when a woman from the Home Office vanishes; a mysterious lady turns up at the archery shooting gallery; and Paul's gambling addiction worsens...

Shadow of the Hangman Details

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Author : Edward Marston

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Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Mystery, Crime, Historical Mystery

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From Reader Review Shadow of the Hangman for online ebook

Richard says

Edward Marston has captured a niche into almost every piece of history and setting a detective series within that timeframe.

Here we are transported into the Great Britain in 1815 an area of history I know a great deal about since it was the topic and starting point of my 'O' level syllabus.

They say that history is written by the victors and that is seem cleverly here. Defeat in the colonies of America are passed over as we find London being triumphant over victory over Napoleon and the French at Waterloo.

The author is a master story teller and weaves his magic with an involved plot that mercifully is never over complicated. The many different strands give the book both a steady pace and an interesting feel as topics and characters are interchanged.

The writing is so crisp and its message so clear that characters remain formed in the reader's mind. There is no need to go back and check people out and remind yourself of their place in the story. Yet the book is littered with well-drawn individuals who pass before you as fully formed characters.

The writing flows and the thrust of the story never stalls or diverts down some dead-end place.

However, you should realise that the same scenarios will be played out with twins as the main protagonists and a rivalry between their special services offered in detective work against the blunt instrument of bow street runners an early police enforcement agency.

The story is simple and has many aspects of appeal for a variety of tastes but also at times quite transparent in my opinion although many aspects of misdirection and partial reveals are used to good effect.

In the end the failure to identify motive and the aspirations of some of the players is almost unforgivable. In my opinion it sits uneasy in the otherwise success of the Skillen brothers.

As a new series to follow I am hooked and I hope to learn more about this interesting period I first encountered aged 14. Let me know what you think, I'm sure most will enjoy this book and those that follow.

Todayiamadaisy says

Set in 1815, this is the first in a series about identical twin detectives. In this case, they are called in by the Home Secretary to find a missing woman and to find two missing prisoners, which ends up also covering assassination attempts, kidnapping and illegal fighting rings. There is a lot going on here, and I found it hard to get into at first as there are so many stories and points of view: we find out what the twins are up to; we spend time with their bumbling rivals, the Bow Street Runners; we get a few chapters from the missing woman and from the prisoners; plus a few single points of view from various other parties. There's a ripping yarn in here somewhere, but there was too much going on for me to find it.

Laura says

I really enjoyed my first encounter with Edward Marston's work, and the Skillen Brothers. This was an amusing, and captivating read and I really enjoyed the historical context surrounding it. I also didn't get confused with all of the characters which I often finds happens when I'm reading mystery/crime books so I

was very impressed with that.

My only issue was I felt certain aspects were wrapped up a little too quickly at the end, but nonetheless am excited to continue in the series!!

4.25 stars

Andrew says

This was a good introduction to the series, and especially the Skilleen brothers - Peter and Paul. This book gives quite a nice flavour of the period at the end of the Battle of Waterloo. It also shows the underlying repercussions following this war and also the American War of 1812, with a connection to both these events. A rather convoluted assassination attempt is in the making and the Skilleen brothers set about trying to prevent the outcome, aided or rather at times hindered by their fierce rivals, the Bow Street Runners. It was a very enjoyable, light and quick read that held my attention throughout. I will look to continue the series although likely to leave a gap between each one.

Marian Taylor says

Another great book and apparently another new series.

Set after the battle of Waterloo we are introduced to the Skillen brothers, who are great rivals to the Bow Street runners, catching thieves and unmasking and solving a variety of mysterious plots.

I have loved some of the previous series such The Railway Detective and the Redmayne series look forward to reading this series too

Ches Torrants says

This book recounts the adventures of twin brother detectives in nineteenth-century London. The maritime conflict with the USA has ended, but American sailors are still being held, under harsh conditions. Two prisoners escape and take their complaints to London. But there are dark secrets and a kidnapping in the Home Secretary's office. Celebrations are being planned for the victory at Waterloo, and an attack is feared. Some of the plot events rely on people mistaking one brother for the other, and on the rivalry between the brothers and the official law enforcers, The Runners.

A good story, written very clearly in its epoch, as we might expect from the author of the railway detective stories. But I felt that the American sailors deserved a happier ending.

Rinske says

[in the whole book the author stresses the dysfunctional relationship between the Skillen brothers and the Bow Street Runners. And then, in the final pages, they suddenly work together to arrest the escaped prisoners. That for me was very out of the blue and out of character. (hide spoiler)]

Cheryl says

This was an enjoyable historical mystery. I would say, however, that the mystery isn't so much a mystery in the sense that the reader knows who the culprit is early on. It is more a case of hearing the culprit and detectives viewpoints as the case is solved. The story was good and had some nice twist and turns to it. You got to know the main characters a bit better. Overall, I liked this book and I will read the next book in the series.

Jayne Catherine pinkett says

4.5* This is the first of Edward Marston's latest historical fiction series, The Bow Street rivals #1. The third just being released this year 2017.

This is set in the early 1800s and features the Bow Street runners who were officially tasked with keeping law and order together with rival thief takers The Skillen brothers.

An exciting plot with twists along the way, packed with action and a true sense of accurate historical ambience.

A satisfactory ending leaving me excited to continue the series

Caroline says

This is the first book in the fourth series of historical novels by Edward Marston. I really enjoyed it.

Set in the early nineteenth century, just after Wellington's victory at Waterloo, the action centres round a Dartmoor prison, with American inmates, and the Home Office under Lord Sidmouth in London, where plans are afoot to celebrate Wellington's famous victory.

Two escaped American prisoners make their way to London, and threaten Home Secretary Sidmouth's life if he doesn't meet their demands.

Meanwhile, a cleaner goes missing and her replacement is too good to be true. Vital information is stolen, but eventually the plot is uncovered by the Bow Street Runners, with more than a little help from a set of identical twins, whose methods are somewhat unorthodox.

Phil Vivian says

Edward Marston's crime novels have long been my light reading. The dialogue does become very predictable in style - lots of information that characters would not need to give each other, used as a device for informing the reader. Enjoyable yarns and I read them for what they are.

Jo Jenner says

Yet another great book from Edward Marston.

If you like your crime novels historical with great characters who are well developed then this is the book for you.

This one is set in 1815 and my only complaint was that it read a little too like the railway detective novels also by this author, so much so that I kept thinking we were in the late 1800's not the early 1800's. Not that that matters.

The fact the two main characters are twins also isn't an issue however the fact they are called Peter and Paul is. The amount of times I had to check back which brother was which was ridiculous. I know parents tend to give twins similar names but in the interest of reader enjoyment Peter and James would have made things a lot less confusing.

Helene Harrison says

Review - I thoroughly enjoyed this novel about one of my favourite historical periods. Having already read the Nicholas Bracewell series, set in Elizabethan London, I was anxious to also read this one. The first book in the series didn't disappoint, and I felt like I was right there among the action and the characters. The only thing I would say is that there seems to be a lot made of Peter and Paul's competition over Charlotte - it would be nice to see how that happened.

Genre? - Historical / Crime / Mystery

Characters? - Paul Skillen / Peter Skillen / Charlotte Skillen / Gully Ackford / Tom O'Gara / Moses Dagg / Viscount Sidmouth / Micah Yeomans

Setting? - London (England)

Series? - Bow Street Rivals #1

Recommend? – Yes

Rating - 18/20

Gerry says

Edward Marston's new series 'The Bow Street Rivals' cements his reputation as a master storyteller even more as in 'Shadow of the Hangman' he maintains the gripping and action-packed style he exhibits in all his other series.

Twins Peter and Paul Skillen are the main protagonists in this tale. They are detectives who rival the official Bow Street Runners, who feel that they should have a monopoly on policing in London. But all too often they are outwitted by the Skillen twins, who always seem to be one step ahead of them.

'Shadow of a Hangman' has two escaped prisoners from Dartmoor making their perilous way to London where they intend to commit an act of atrocity. Home Secretary Viscount Sidmouth is targeted and the suggestion is that if the escaped convicts demands are not met he will be murdered.

Sidmouth, against the better wishes of his Runners, hires the Skillens to bring the fugitives to justice. However, he also has his Runners in the frame making their own investigations so throughout the story there is this continuing rivalry between the two parties.

Both parties find themselves in perilous situations but all along, despite various injuries, they all manage to survive and continue their pursuit of the villains. Those villains, both American, intermingle with London's Irish community who do their best to deceive the authorities but in the end the Skillens get the better of them and finally apprehend the convicts.

Throughout there are one or two sub-plots, romantic as far as the Skillens are concerned and worrying for various other characters who are on the fringes of the main plot. It is a compelling tale of murder, kidnap, revenge, intrigue and political machination and is certainly one to be recommended by one of the masters of this genre.

Vanessa says

Really enjoyed the read: the story line was perhaps a touch predictable but was a refreshing detour for me none the less. Haven't read another Marston so unable to comment on whether its a departure from his normal style or just another repeat with different names, but as a one off it was a welcome and attention holding read.
