



## Perfect Remains

*Helen Sarah Fields*

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**Perfect Remains** Helen Sarah Fields

*The first in a nail-shredding new crime series. Fans of M.J. Arlidge will be gripped from start to finish.*

On a remote Highland mountain, the body of Elaine Buxton is burning. All that will be left to identify the respected lawyer are her teeth and a fragment of clothing.

In the concealed back room of a house in Edinburgh, the real Elaine Buxton screams into the darkness.

Detective Inspector Luc Callanach has barely set foot in his new office when Elaine's missing persons case is escalated to a murder investigation. Having left behind a promising career at Interpol, he's eager to prove himself to his new team. But Edinburgh, he discovers, is a long way from Lyon, and Elaine's killer has covered his tracks with meticulous care.

It's not long before another successful woman is abducted from her doorstep, and Callanach finds himself in a race against the clock. Or so he believes ... The real fate of the women will prove more twisted than he could have ever imagined.

Fans of Angela Marson, Mark Billingham and M. J. Aldridge will be gripped by this chilling journey into the mind of a troubled killer.

## Perfect Remains Details

Date : Published January 26th 2017 by Avon

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Author : Helen Sarah Fields

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## From Reader Review Perfect Remains for online ebook

### **Eva says**

Take one DI, who left his job at Interpol in France under a cloud. Place him in rainy Edinburgh. Then add one of the most disturbed killers you've ever encountered and you get a chilling, gripping, sometimes gruesome but totally addictive page-turner!

It's the stuff of nightmares and possibly not for the faint hearted but so brilliant.

I can't wait for the next installment in this series, which is due out in June 2017.

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### **Andrea says**

Really enjoyed this book, love a good crime book. great read can't wait till next book. great characters loved Ava. and it's great set in Scotland where I'm from.

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### **Karen Whittard says**

This is a gripping physiological crime thriller. A must read if you like your crime thrillers, dark, deadly, creepy and gripping.

This is the first book in the series and what a start to what is sure to be a promising series. Elen Fields writhing style is dark, twisted and utterly compelling. I couldn't put their book down this morning and devoured it very, very quickly.

In a rocket mountain in Scotland a body is being burned. There will not be much remains but the world will think that Elaine Buxton is dead and gone. However they are wrong. Elaine is being held in a house against her will, stripped of her name, personality and will to survive. She is being tortured by a twisted serial killer who finds pleasure in torturing her.

Luc Callanch arrives on the seen a Interpol detective Part French and Part Scottish. Who believes it's best to treat his colleges mean to keep them keen. He has only just started when the case of Elaine's death and disappearance escalates.

It is not long before a minister is abducted and the clues lead to her being abducted I. The same way as Elaine.

It is up to Luc Callanch and his team to find both women and the killer before it's too late.

To be honest this is a really gripping book. With a fast paced storyline and lots of things happening to keep the story moving. The writing style is gripping and it had the right about of mix between twisted serial killer chapters and investigation chapters to keep the reader gripped. Elen doesn't shy away from all the gory details.

I however wasn't a fan of Luc. I found him arrogant and rude and extremely big headed. I didn't warm to him at all. But there are a lot of people in his team that are lovely and such wonderful characters.

This is a really good start to a new detective book and if you want something to sink your teeth into then look no further.

Happy reading everyone

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### **KC says**

After relocating from France to Scotland, DI Luc Callanach finds himself thrust into a high profile abduction case. When one victim turns into two, Callanach and his team soon unearth two bodies who appear to be the seized women. In this fast paced police drama, readers will be racing to the end to unveil its electrifying conclusion. This outstanding series is definitely for those who enjoy M. J. Arlidge, Karin Slaughter and Robert Bryndza.

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### **Linda Strong says**

This debut novel features DI Luc Callanach and his team. He's new to the area and new to the job. Being half French, half Scottish does not endear him to everyone on his team. He is eager to prove himself to his new team.

He has barely found his new office when a missing person's case becomes a homicide. Elaine Buxton is found burned to a crisp. The only thing remaining that can identify her is a tooth and a shred of material not too far from her body.

It's not long before another successful woman is abducted from her doorstep, and Callanach finds himself in a race against the clock. Or so he believes ... The real fate of the women will prove more twisted than he could have ever imagined.

The killer/kidnapper is identified fairly early in the reading, but it doesn't take away anything from the story. This killer is smart, and stays at least one step ahead of the police during the investigation. He is evil, malicious, and the reason he does the things he does will take your breath away.

Luc is a terrific character. I loved how the author wove his professional life with his personal life and the things that brought him to where he is now. His team has his back .. all except one who bears a grudge against Callanach and complains about him at every turn. His anger may send the investigation spiralling in a totally wrong direction.

I liked how the characters interacted with each other and how they learn to work for one goal. This story is action packed, full of surprises and the ending left me totally surprised. This is definitely an author to watch. I look forward to reading the 2nd book in this series -- **PERFECT PREY**.

Many thanks to the author / Avon Books / Edelweiss for the digital copy of this journey through the mind of a very troubled killer. Opinions expressed here are unbiased and entirely my own.

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### ♥ Jx PinkLady Reviews ♥ says

A fab crime read with lots of pace and gory scenes. A convincing charismatic relationship between the police protagonists made sure to balance out the grim scenes very nicely, ensuring, 'Perfect Remains,' is an addictive and engaging read. Readers are privy to the identity of the murderer and his horrendous crimes all the way through making this more of a how-will-he-get-caught rather than a who-done-it.

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### Liz Barnsley says

Perfect Remains is basically a totally addictive utterly gripping one sitting read. It is brutal though, be warned, some of the descriptions made me peek out suspiciously from behind a cushion, a bit like when I pretend I'm brave enough to fully embrace those horror movies...

One thing I really liked about this one is that its not a traditional whodunnit or even really whydunnit its more about the psychology of the crime, in its investigative elements that trend continues, those out to solve the case are put under the microscope just as much. As the start to a new series it was done very well, I was intrigued and engaged by both Luc and Ava, especially in relation to their growing relationship, it is obvious that Helen Fields is not going to pull any punches and I shall certainly be reading on when the next one is out.

The writing is riveting and clever, drawing you in, the level of suspense is brilliantly done, ramping things up as we go, keeping that sharp, knifes edge feeling about proceedings throughout then throwing us into a heart stopping and ruthless conclusion.

Overall I really enjoyed it - if you like your crime fiction vicious yet human, razor sharp and captivating, then Perfect Remains is probably for you.

Recommended.

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### Helga says

4.5

A real page-turner and first in a new series, Perfect Remains is a gripping crime/thriller set in Scotland (<3). It is fast-paced, gruesome and tense, with well-developed characters, sans unnecessary details. Usually i hate when the identity of the culprit is revealed in the beginning, but with this one i was hooked till the last page. Can't wait to read the second installment!

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### Nigel says

In brief - Overly violent in places for me but a decent read and I'd read the next one.

In full

The outline blurb of this book looked interesting. Police from Edinburgh are investigating the discovery of a burnt body in the Cairngorms. This may relate to a missing person enquiry in the city. Luc Callanach is in charge. He is part Scottish and part French and has only just started working in Edinburgh. He is a Detective Inspector. It's one of those stories where we know who the murderer is very early on. The question is how many murders has he committed and how many more will there be.

Initially I found the story slightly unappealing. The way Luc deals with his team (and they with him) felt awkward and wrong to some degree. There is fairly extreme violence in this book too - beyond what I would probably like. It was tagged as "fans of M J Arlidge will be gripped". I am one, I wasn't and this didn't not feel anything like Arlidge's writing to start with. However the story did draw me in fairly quickly and quite easily.

As I read more the writing felt better and the characters started to develop quite nicely. As we gradually find out more about Luc - he has a "past" - I grew to like him. I also liked his fellow DI, Ava Turner, almost from the start. Indeed I found the case she was working on a better story than the one about the murders initially.

Warming to the story I realised that, although violent, the murderer, Dr King, was a very well drawn character. His planning most of the time is meticulous and makes for a good story. By the time I was halfway through I really was reluctant to put this book down. The tension mounts and I certainly found the ending satisfactory.

In the end I did enjoy reading this even though it was a bit violent. It was well paced and populated with good characters. I'd certainly like to read the next Luc Callanach story.

Note - I received an advance digital copy of this book from the publisher in exchange for a fair review  
<http://viewson.org.uk/police/perfect-...>

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### **Siobhan says**

I love a good crime thriller, and I especially love the current trend where most British crime thrillers are set in Scotland. Obviously, I have a soft spot for my local area – I’m looking at you Stuart MacBride and your Logan McRae series – but I’ll grab any that seem interesting.

The synopsis of Perfect Remains was moderately interesting to me. I was on the edge about whether or not I wanted to pick up the book. It was one I would be looking out for, but I wouldn’t be going out of my way to purchase the book. Then, I noticed a Goodreads giveaway. I entered with my usual ‘I am unlikely to win’ attitude. The email notification informing me of my win left me more excited to read this one. The feeling died down somewhat whilst I waited for it to arrive, but once I had my hands on the book I jumped straight into the story.

I’ll be completely honest and say I wasn’t crazy about the book at first. It had potential, but it wasn’t quite grabbing me in the way I like my crime thrillers to grab me. I was able to put the book down without a voice in the back of my head cursing me out. In all honesty, I can easily explain why such was the case.

I’m not a fan of crime thrillers when you know who the killer is at the start of the book. I enjoy the whodunit

aspect of such stories, I like trying to puzzle out the mystery, and knowing who the bad guy is ruins this for me. This aversion is my own, and I know many people have no problem with such a thing. However, for me, it made it difficult for me to really bury myself in the story.

It also took me a while to enjoy the characters. They existed in my mind, yes, but I didn't feel much towards them. They were just a way to tell the story, not someone I could come to enjoy. For anyone feeling this way, I recommend you stick with the book for a while. It takes a decent amount of time, but once the story is moving, then the characters really start to develop. Questions gather, information is given, and as a whole they really come to life.

Thus, this was a book whereby it took me a while to really enjoy it. I was unsure as to how I would feel by the end, but once everything came together I enjoyed the story much more than I'd originally anticipated. Whilst certain elements of the story were overly clear from the start, there were some nice twists thrown in later in the book, and these elements sucked me right in.

Overall, I say you need to stick with this one. It's not the most gripping of books at the start of the story, but once it gets moving, it becomes so much more than you expect it to be.

Without a doubt, I'm interested in seeing what book two brings us.

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### **Matt says**

Helen Fields introduces readers to a stunning new series that will chill them to the bone while trying to balance the unique style of Detective Inspector Luc Callanach. In a shake-up of Edinburgh's Homicide Team, D.I. Luc Callanach arrives on the scene, to the dismay of many. This outsider is a recent transfer from INTERPOL and has an odd background: a Scottish father and French mother. Callanach has spent much of his life in France, where his cultural and linguistic influences are strong. However, his work comes highly praised and he is ready to tackle the most soul-draining cases the city has to offer. After the abduction of Elaine Buxton, Callanach and his team are sent to piece together the few clues that are on offer. Forensics leave little to be surmised, save that Buxton was likely beaten with a baseball bat, which dislodged a few of her teeth. When a body emerges, the case turns from one of a missing person to full-fledged homicide. However, in a soundproof bunker, the perpetrator has stored Elaine and kept her alive for his own reasons. He is fully aware of his actions and seeks to throw the police off the path with a similarly shaped body and some forensics that will keep everyone from looking too hard for Buxton. After another kidnapping, Dr. Reginald King seems to be getting bolder. He is happy to continue this game of cat and mouse, though does not hole away in private. King holds down a position within the Department of Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh, where he is scorned by his colleagues and left to stew in increased resentment. King has precise plans and keeps himself planning, while the world around him remains baffled. With few leads, Callanach is handed another case, as newborns have begun appearing dead, apparently disposed of for no reason. Callanach uses his gruff demeanour to extract information and learns that it could be some sort of sadistic game. When one of Callanach's team goes missing after receiving mysterious gifts at the office, everyone is left to wonder if the perp (King) has crossed the blue line and will kill her as well. Callanach can waste no time and scours reports and forensics for a piece of overlooked evidence before another body turns up, while the apparent victims slowly fade at King's hands. Fields has surely made a namer for herself here and paints Luc Callanach as a character who has much potential in this crowded genre. Perfect for those who love a good police procedural/crime thriller.

This was my first experience with Helen Fields and I cannot remember having received any outright recommendations to read this book. Therefore, my going in blind left me gambling, something that has paid off tremendously. Not only is the story well-crafted, but the characters grow as the narrative progresses, never losing momentum. While there are many police procedural out there, it is the author's ability to stand out that makes this book something the reader will remember. D.I. Luc Callanach is a character that is surely unique in all he brings to the story. A transfer from INTERPOL, Callanach is a pariah upon his arrival in Edinburgh and brings a significant amount of baggage, which is amply explored as Fields develops his backstory. The addition of the stereotypical gruff French background works well here, as Callanach taps into his maternal roots to extract information out of witnesses, while annoying colleagues and superiors at every turn. However, as fans of the genre will realize, it is the end result that is most important, not kid-glove wearing throughout that solves cases. Fields adds a wonderful cross-section of others to complement Callanach, as well as fully revealing and developing the perpetrator from the outside. Contrasting and comparing Callanach with King, the reader can see some parallels here that only enrich the story more. Dabbling with a handful of secondary characters, the story progresses and offers many plots that keep the reader from getting too focused on one perspective. The story itself is well developed, not seeking to push the focus on a single event, but also not diluting the narrative such that the reader is confused from chapter to chapter. Fields paces the story in such a way that all characters have the chance to influence the progress of the narrative, but does not allow the reader too much advanced warning of what is to come around the corner. The reader is pulled in and kept wondering, even with both sides of the story, which is the key to a successful novel. I look forward to more D.I. Callanach and see that there is another out and two more set for 2018. I may just have found another author to add to my ongoing book searches and one I would highly recommend.

Kudos, Madam Fields, for showing how you can craft a wonderful story. You have me hooked after a debut novel, which is not always easy. I am eager to find more of your work and seeing if I am as enthralled as I was here.

Love/hate the review? An ever-growing collection of others appears at:  
<http://pecheyponderings.wordpress.com/>

A Book for All Seasons, a different sort of Book Challenge: [https://www.goodreads.com/group/show/...](https://www.goodreads.com/group/show/)

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## Sandy says

4.5 stars

Some books leave you feeling warm & fuzzy, some leave you sad or thoughtful. This book left me with palpitations & an irrational fear of dentures.

Elaine Buxton is having a really bad day. You'd think being abducted by a mad man would be your worst nightmare come true. Wrong. Unfortunately he has a few...um...procedures planned as part of his scheme to convince everyone she is dead.

Luc Callanach is having a marginally better day. He recently left a job with Interpol under a cloud & has surfaced as a DI in Edinburgh. Rumours are swirling & he's not exactly being embraced by his new team. The fact that he doesn't want to be there is not helping.

He's called about a body found in a burned out bothy in the Caimgorms. It's not his jurisdiction but there's a chance it could be missing Edinburgh lawyer Elaine Buxton. They can't know it yet but he & his team are about to come up against a devious & meticulous killer. More women will be taken & more will die as the killer hides in plain sight.

We know his identity early on & he's just one the characters who take turns narrating the story. Others include members of Luc's squad & his colleague DI Ava Turner. She's a smart, hard working cop & one of the few to reach out & welcome Luc to the force. Initially he rebuffs her friendship but as the story progresses her warm & straight forward manner begins to thaw his cool, prickly demeanour. She's got a difficult investigation of her own concerning abandoned babies & they bounce ideas off each other as they struggle to crack the cases.

So here's the heads up. This is not for the faint of heart. Our killer is one of the most frightening you'll come across in fiction & there are some gruesome scenes. What elevates this book above others in the genre is smooth, self assured prose & the depth of the characters. Dialogue is crisp & lean & I particularly enjoyed the rapport between Ava & Luc. No worries....you won't find any cheesy insta-lust scenarios here. These are mature, well defined characters who gradually forge a friendship based on commonality & mutual respect. Ava sparkles with intelligence & wit & I enjoyed her ability to loosen up the tightly wound Luc. Their conversations are full of welcome humour that helps balance out the rising tension surrounding the fate of the abducted women.

There are plenty of side stories dealing with Luc's past & other characters that keep this ticking along at a steady pace until you hit the 3/4 mark. Then it becomes a sprint to the finish. It's flat out addictive, one of those books you really resent having to put down & I stayed up waaay too late simply because I had to know how it ended (just ask coworkers who had to deal with my cranky self the next day).

If you like your thrillers scary & smart, this is a stand out entry in grit-lit. Can't wait for "Perfect Prey" due out in late June which gives me time to get over....you know....the denture thing.

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## Love says

Where do I start with this masterpiece? I started this book for my facebook group monthly pick (more about that later). Now crime and thriller books are not my normal genre. However, with this new blogging path I am on I decided to venture outside my comfort zone. By gosh am I glad that I did. My toes were actually curling as I read the first few chapters. I don't do spoilers so don't worry you can read on. The book is set in Edinburgh which is my home City. It was appealing to me to be able to see in mind exactly the street or place that's mentioned in the book. I was transported there and it made it just that wee bit more creepy if that is even possible.

In the past with some crime books, I have had to skim read the descriptive parts of a killing or attack. Because it would read like a textbook and I would zone out. NOT with this book, Helen Fields has a unique quality of keeping things real and exciting. No skimming required, in fact, you want more and more of the book.

My favourite character was Callanach, who we meet right from the start. His own personal demons, haunt him throughout the book and this adds even more depth and storytelling.

The cover is beautiful and there are three variations out and about I think. I was very lucky to meet Helen at an event in Edinburgh, at the famous Blackwell's Book Store.

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### **Britta says**

Great book, I really enjoyed it. Hope the next book in the series is as good as the first one. I will definitely read it.

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### **Sara says**

I'm very hit and miss when it comes to crime novels, but this had some good Goodreads reviews so I thought I'd give it a go. It follows the typical pattern of killer on the loose being tracked by troubled detectives as they rush to uncover the clever mastermind before he can kill again. I suppose the main 'twist', or difference, is that the killer hasn't actually killed the woman he's supposedly taken (not a spoiler - you find this out in the first chapter). He's just set it up in the belief he's one step ahead of the police.

The plot is pretty good. It's reasonably fast paced and doesn't diverge too much from the main storyline. We learn enough about the killings and crime scenes, from both the police and killer's perspectives, to keep me interested right until the end and the interweaving between the killer initially setting up these crime scenes and the police falling into his traps was well done. I found I got a great deal of satisfaction from seeing the police finally discovering the truth, and the race against time to pin him down.

This definitely felt more like a psychological, character driven story rather than the traditional 'whodunnit'. A lot of the story centres around the various character interactions and their relationships rather than the crimes themselves, which at times made for an interesting insight. D.I. Callanach, our French-Scottish protagonist, is hard to like at first. He's standoffish and curt, snapping at his officers and making no friends in his new job. It made it hard for me to warm to him, and at first I really struggled to connect with the story. However as his backstory is addressed, we get a better understanding of why he is the way he is, and this made it easier to build a connection with the character. In comparison, I found Ava immediately likeable. She's intelligent, but not in an obvious over the top way, and is passionate about her work. I enjoyed her sub story (although I admit I didn't really see what the point of it was in terms of adding anything to the overall plot other than expanding her role in the novel). I also enjoyed their dynamics and interactions together, which I feel has been set up subtly to suggest more than merely a working relationship in future novels. The secondary characters are also reasonably well developed, and again I enjoyed their various interactions with both Luc and Ava.

The antagonist killer is suitably arrogant and creepy. There's a sense of foreboding that seems to follow him around, even when he's not actively killing or stalking, that permeates all of his interactions with people. I don't think I'll be able to smell moth balls again. I did feel we didn't get as good a backstory as our protagonists to really fully explore his reasons behind all of his actions, and felt the plot could have gone further with the aftermath of his deeds. However, overall I thought he was a good foil for Ava and Luc.

The ending is good, and wraps everything up well with no loose endings while building relationships enough to keep me intrigued for future novels. I just wish the start had not been so slow in its character development, or this could easily have been a 4 star read from me. That said, this is a hard genre to get right for me, and this definitely had me more interested than most.

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