

LoveReading Reader reviews of The Crossing Places by Elly Griffiths A Ruth Galloway Investigation

Below are the complete reviews of the first book in the series, written by LoveReading members.

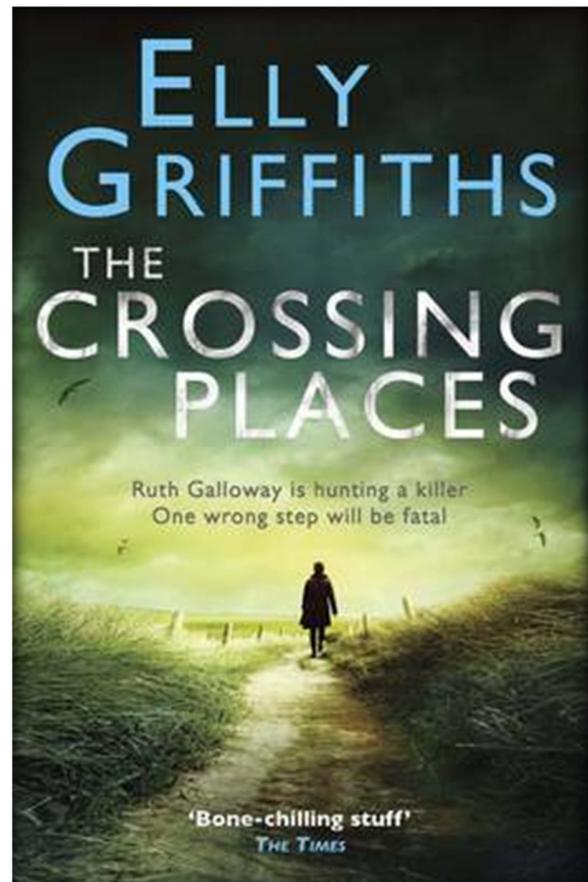
Emily Wright

Elly Griffiths combines detection, archaeology and mythology to create an atmospheric thriller lightened by a touch of dry humour.

DCI Nelson has never forgotten the disappearance of young Lucy a decade ago. When bones are found on the Saltmarsh, a desolate Norfolk marshland, he asks archaeologist Ruth Galloway to excavate, but the remains are Iron Age. When another girl goes missing, Nelson receives more of the letters which have taunted him since Lucy's disappearance. Sinister references to mythology, religion and archaeology tell of a world Nelson knows little about. He calls on Ruth to help decipher the letters.

With two girls missing, Ruth, living on the edge of the marsh, is drawn inexplicably and dangerously into the investigation.

The location of the Saltmarsh is pivotal and the landscape works to give the plot an eerie feel, strongly echoing the novel's theme. Despite dark undertones, I found the novel an easy, engaging read. The plot's intriguing twists and turns kept me guessing, with suspicions flitting between suspects. I enjoyed the nuggets of archaeological information; this detail enhances the novel and makes it stand out in its genre. The subject matter (two missing children) could be harrowing and disturbing but in Griffiths's hands this added poignancy and



intrigue to the novel rather than graphic realism.

'The Crossing Places' is the first in a series and the ending, whilst satisfyingly tying together all the threads, leaves the reader with a tantalising hint of what lies in store next for Ruth and Nelson.

Suzanne Marsh

*What I liked about 'The Crossing Places' is that I could picture all the scenes where everything was taking place. I was amazed at how the story was brought to life by great characters. Ruth is overweight and lives alone with her adorable cats. She is an expert on bone preservation, and is called upon by the police to date some child bones that they have found. When Ruth explains to the police that the bones are from the Iron Age they lost interest. Detective Chief Inspector Harry Nelson is desperate to find missing Lucy Downey, who has been missing for ten years, and was rather hoping that the bones were hers. Ruth Galloway helps Harry Nelson find out who has been sending him bizarre letters since Lucy vanished - letters that reference ritual and sacrifice and quote the Bible and Shakespeare. Another criminal investigation snaps into light as another girl goes missing from her garden. With a hunt on for a killer there is bone-chilling stuff running throughout this story. I found 'The Crossing Places' a **very refreshing and enjoyable read. Indeed this is a clever novel with the mix of superstition and myth weaved into a modern crime novel. A must buy must read.***

www.ireadnovels.wordpress.com

Phylippa Smithson

The trouble with absorbing and fast-paced books is that you tend to read them at the same rapid pace – and then they are over. That's my ONLY criticism of 'The Crossing Places' - its brilliant.

Ruth is living her enjoyable life in the very remotest of places in the marshlands of East Anglia. By day she is a forensic lecturer with expertise in bones at the local University, by night she spends her evenings alone in her tiny cottage, with her adored cats.

Then her whole world is disrupted when she is called in to help the local police as they work to identify whether the bones uncovered at an ancient burial site belong to missing 4 year old, Scarlet Henderson.

DCI Harry Nelson, heading up the investigation, is a hard northerner who is not enamoured with the world that his promotion has brought him to (way too remote, way too bleak). His hard and aloof style is also influenced by his failure to resolve the disappearance ten years previously of 5 year old Lucy Downey.

But Ruth and Harry complement one another, both in their professional skills and in their respective personalities. Slowly but surely, they find a very effective balance as the clues revealed by letters received by Harry show them the path to close both crimes.

This is a book delivered with great humour, with engaging characters and very much a compelling thriller. Loved it and very glad to know there are more books of Elly Griffiths out there but next time I am going to try, really try, not to read them in one day.

Angie Rhodes

Ruth Galloway is a forensic archaeologist on the Norfolk Coast who, when a child's bones are found, is asked by DCI Harry Nelson to date them, as he is hoping that they are those of missing child Lucy, who vanished ten years ago. Ever since, the police have been taunted by someone sending strange anonymous letters about ritual sacrifice and quoting Shakespeare and the Bible.

Now a second child has vanished and Harry has asked for Ruth's help, but this has now put her in grave danger - a danger that is closer to home. Is the killer someone she knows? Whoever it is, they know her every move, and Ruth is now in fear for her life...

Great book, with an ending I was not expecting.

Jan Kirkcaldy

Having read a later novel in the series ("The Outcast Dead"), I found "The Crossing Places" particularly interesting. It's obviously the first to introduce DCI Harry Nelson to Forensic Archaeologist Dr. Ruth Galloway and explains a lot if you've read them in the wrong order!

The storyline of first a cold case involving a missing child and secondly, another child going missing in similar circumstances is not exactly original yet somehow becomes completely gripping from the start. The characters are different and interesting and detailed descriptions of the Norfolk marshes, archaeological sites and digs quite fascinating. Almost sounds boring but it

definitely isn't with all sorts of diversions and frightening incidents throughout. Galloway and Nelson are opposites but with a common sensitivity when dealing with the horror of murder and the reaction of all those involved. They are a most unlikely yet likeable team. **Though not surprised by the end result, it was a book I could not put down and as a result read it in one go. I thoroughly recommend it.**

Edel Waugh

This is book one in the Ruth Galloway series. The setting of this story surrounds the Saltmarsh, a bleak and historical place that the main character and archeologist Ruth Galloway worked on many years previously. The author describes this place so well that you really get a vivid image of it as grey and dangerous as it can be. Something has been found at the Saltmarsh, bones, and with a missing local child everybody is worried. Detective Chief inspector Harry Nelson is on the case and he calls for Ruth's professional help in identifying how old the bones are.

I loved this tale of mystery and history!

*Ruth is a strong female character who shows empathy and intelligence while being brave in difficult situations. Nelson and Ruth make a good team so even though the storylines are serious they are interesting together, there is respect there for each other and it will be interesting to see if that will go somewhere in future books in this series. Trying to guess who the bad guy was had me guessing right to the very end and there were a few surprises thrown in too so I did not put this book down until I finished it in one go. **Loved it! I will now go back and read the other books in this series as I really did enjoy it. If you liked Kathy Reichs or Patricia Cornwell then perhaps check this series out.***

<http://www.edelwaugh.blogspot.com>

Ray Orgill

This is really atmospheric writing at its best. Set in a saltmarsh on the East Anglian coast, the action centres on an ancient henge where ritual killings and burials have featured and where the air of menace continues. The disappearances of two children at different times form the investigation, and the main character who lives in the saltmarsh is herself an archaeologist. She unwillingly gets dragged into the mystery and equally unwillingly into a minor

dalliance with a very taciturn Detective Chief Inspector. **Great stuff, great adventure, in fact a great read.**

Sarah Musk

An exciting book set in Norfolk with a clever, resourceful leading character. Dr Ruth Galloway is utterly believable as a sleuthing archaeologist in a child disappearance case.

Elly Griffiths has created an interesting character in Dr Ruth Galloway. She is very smart and very human with the same identifiable worries and hang-ups as the rest of us. She loves her cats, frets a bit about her weight and is driven mad by her mother who seems to be forever disappointed with her because she is not married.

The subject matter is compelling. Ruth is an archaeologist and is called in to help the police when a child's skeleton is discovered. From then on the plot is interwoven with a present day potential murder case and the death of a young girl two thousand years ago. I loved the descriptions of the saltmarsh and Ruth's connection with the distant past through the saltmarsh and her compulsion to live overlooking the landscape.

Her relationship with the police detective is ripe for future developments and I will certainly read the next book in the series because I am curious to find out what will happen between them.

If you like a clever, exciting plot with astute human interactions then this is the book for you. Dr Ruth Galloway is a great leading lady - clever, enterprising, resourceful and above all - believable.

Jillian McFrederick

This was my first introduction to Elly Griffiths and her immensely likeable heroine, forensic archeologist Ruth Galloway. Her slightly eccentric lifestyle and interests create an appealing impression from the outset and the atmospheric landscape of the Norfolk marshes give a great backdrop to the novel.

I loved the whole world created by the author, the dynamics of complicated relationships, the mystery of the discovered bones combined with the history of the land. Together they form a blend of ancient times and rituals with the present which I enjoyed immensely.

I have moved on to read other books in this series with equal relish and look forward to the new publication coming in October. Thoroughly recommended!

Julie Bertschin

Great page turner, gripping from start to finish.

Ruth's life as a college lecturer in archaeology is taken over when a child's bones are discovered on the salt marsh that is in front of her home. She becomes embroiled in a mystery involving the case of two missing children, assisting the police with their enquiries with her expertise in carbon dating bones and her knowledge of the area. As the investigation progresses she finds herself further drawn into the matter, her friendships and neighbours all under suspicion. A thoroughly engaging read!

Julie Bickerdyke

The story is cleverly told and slowly released with relationships explored and exploited to great effect.

This is the first Elly Griffiths book I have read, but it won't be my last. I loved this book and read it very quickly. It was a fascinating and gripping read.

The story grabbed your attention - and kept it.

The character Ruth Galloway seems an unlikely heroine but you soon come to love her. DCI Harry Nelson is an equally unlikely love interest for Ruth and you find yourself wanting to know if things will progress between them whilst not even being sure you want it to.

The story is cleverly told and slowly released with relationships explored and exploited to great effect.

This is a true thriller story that has you on edge as you read. The mystery of the missing girls is horrifying, more so because of the interspersed passages narrated by one of the girls - but which one - and is she still alive or is this retrospective?

You can follow Julie on Twitter: @Julesbickerdyke

Cyllene Griffiths

As a professional archaeologist one could pick technical holes in this book,

although I note the author has had some specialist assistance - but let's face it if you want accuracy you would pick up a fieldwork manual, wouldn't you? Also, Ruth is clearly not a forensic archaeologist which is a completely different specialism, so, let's forget the archaeology, which simply adds an attractive context to the story, and try to describe the book. I suppose one could call it 'detective story meets chick-lit'? Perhaps reduce the chick-lit to approximately 25% and you would be about there. The story itself is quite fascinating, although I am slightly worried by the stereotyped characters – a druid who wears a purple cloak called Cathbad? A world weary gruff detective? A scruffy opinionated archaeologist? A quiet , elusive and secretive bird watcher?...

Altogether this is an amusing book, a light read, but very little more. This is however, the first in a long series and as I have not read the others, perhaps they improve on a fairly promising start? However, since the series has been going some time and appears popular there must be others who enjoy this genre and the way it is portrayed. Personally I would have preferred more about the detective case and less about Ruth's love life, as I feel that under the gloss there is an interesting story trying to get out.