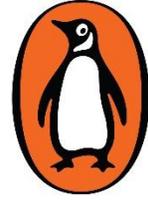


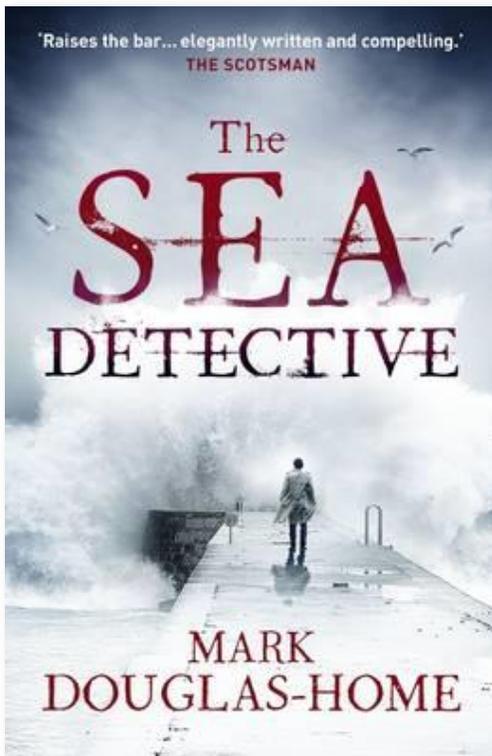


Helping you choose
your next book

Lovereading Reader reviews of **The Sea Detective** by Mark Douglas-Home



Below are the complete reviews, written by Lovereading members.



Elisabeth Thomas

Cal McGill is based in Edinburgh but has family links to the islands North of Scotland. As an oceanographer, Cal is the main authority on ocean currents and how objects are carried around the world on currents. A rule unto himself, Cal is by no means a model citizen. To the police, Cal could be very useful but he is not the sort of person they want to be associated with but to get results sometimes the police have to swallow their pride and ask for his help. In this book, Cal is needed to help find where two severed feet, washed up on a Scottish beach went into the water and why and inadvertently Cal gets pulled into a horrific case of people trafficking.

This book was a breath of fresh air in the genre of crime fiction. Original and gripping I am sure that Cal McGill is set to become the next Inspector Rebus.

I am looking forward to reading the second in the series and reading about more of Cal's investigations and unorthodox methods of finding out the truth.

<https://www.facebook.com/Lis-the-Bookworm-1146448482049674/>

Angie Rhodes

Cal McGill, lives in Edinburgh, his job is not your usual run of the mill 9-5 jobs,

and his is a little bit more interesting than that, because Cal is an Oceanographer, environmentalist, and a one of a kind investigator. He can tack anything that comes from the sea, using his knowledge of Ocean currents, prevailing winds and waves, he will know where they came from, or where they've gone. So when two severed feet wash up miles apart on two different islands off the coast of Scotland, he is called in to help. The more he investigates, the more he unravels lies, corruption and violence.

This is a unique mystery, not the usual murder mystery, and the hero is just perfect.

Joan Sidwell

Different from the usual books of the detective genre, there is no doubt that Mark Douglas-Home knows his subject and can describe it very well.

Nearly everything is different from the usual books of the genre in this debut detective novel. The detective of the title, Cal McGill, is not in the police force, he is an oceanographer and environmentalist in Scotland, something of a renegade.

Mixed with an extremely disturbing story of young Indian girls being forced into prostitution, severed feet belonging to the same body turning up in different places and the mystery surrounding Cal's grandfather's death in the Second World War, this is a densely plotted book with a myriad of supporting characters to match the many strands to the story.

From the extremely unpleasant and ambitious Detective Inspector, who becomes almost a caricature and his downtrodden (though maverick) sidekick, a journalist who will go to great lengths for a story, the old lady with stories from the war and Cal's estranged wife, they all play a part in bringing the book to a conclusion.

The scenes which took place in the police station where I thought rather unnecessary and outdated in terms of behaviour in the workplace and the writing does have a tendency to jump around from subplot to subplot. The tale of Cal's grandfather is rather longwinded but provides background for his family history. There is no doubt that Mark Douglas-Home knows his subject and can describe it very well however I think that tighter editing would have made the book much more enjoyable. I am however intrigued enough to read the subsequent books in the series.

Margaret Freeman

A great book that held me captivated throughout.

This is more of an investigative story than crime fiction, set mainly in Scotland with a strong sense of place throughout. There are several strands to the story, but it's so well told that I had no difficulty in following all of them. It's a story of unsolved mysteries both from the present day and from the Second World War, and of two Indian girls, sold into the sex trafficking trade.

The main characters are all fully rounded and complex - Cal McGill, an expert oceanographer, works for environmental organisations tracking oil spills using wind speeds and data on ocean currents; DI David Ryan and DC Helen Jamieson are investigating the appearance of severed feet in trainers that had been washed on shore on islands miles apart - tests had revealed that they belonged to the same body; and Basanti, one of the Indian girls. I especially liked Helen Jamieson, the overweight policewoman, whose boss, Ryan mistakenly thinks is stupid, and the way she deals with him.

The strand that interested me most concerns Cal's grandfather, from the (fictional) island of Eilean Iasgaich, who had died during the Second World War, washed overboard during a storm – and yet his name had not been included in the island's war memorial. Cal eventually discovers the truth about their deaths.

It's a gripping and emotional story. I loved it.

www.booksplease.org

Edel Waugh

*The story begins with an eye opening prologue where I instantly became interested in what was going to happen. This interest continued throughout the story. There is almost two stories going on here, the story of Cal's own family background in the past and secondly that of young girls traded in a despicable business in present day. There were times it was hard to keep reading, but the need to know what the outcome was going to be kept me flying through the pages. **I love stories about the sea and so the plot interested me, the maritime history and mysteries was fascinating.** Cal is a pretty laid back and decent human being with unusual jobs, he is very likeable and I was rooting for him throughout the story. I would recommend this to anyone who enjoys thrillers, mysteries and maritime tales.*

<http://edelwaugh.blogspot.ie/2016/04/the-sea-detective-by-mark-douglas-home.html>

Nicola Underwood

Interesting read with a different style of detective.

This book was really enjoyable. The main character was easy to identify with and was interesting. The story was in the style of a mystery thriller and had some police corruption and politics thrown in. Set in Scotland, the book is centred around Cal McGill who is an oceanographer studying items washed ashore and their origins based on currents, temperature and wind. The story develops well throughout the book. A secondary character is Detective Constable Helen Jamieson, she had some self-esteem issues that were annoying and was the only one who really let the book down for me.

Thank you to love reading for a copy of the book in return for an honest review.

Jan Kirkcaldy

Looking at the cover this did not really seem my sort of book – an environmentalist playing games with plants and politicians did not fill me with excitement. Fortunately there was much more to this complex but ultimately fascinating tale.

Cal McGill was also an oceanographer and an investigator of sorts and gradually I found myself drawn into his rather unusual world. Whilst helping with information from organisations around the world, he also assisted the police tracking where bodies and body parts could have come from when washed up around the coast of Scotland and other parts of the world. This gradually explained the Indian connection mentioned at the very beginning which had seemed totally irrelevant. There was also a mystery of his own to follow throughout regarding his grandfather who had been lost at sea in wartime.

*The Edinburgh detectives involved, particularly Helen Jamieson seemed very real and Basanti, one of the young Indian women sold into a life of prostitution in Scotland, was understandable. With so many investigations into such practices ongoing these days. **There was so much happening throughout and I found myself so absorbed I didn't want to put it down.** Definitely different. I hope there will be more stories featuring Cal McGill – he certainly doesn't fit the usual mould of investigators which is great. Certainly I would*

*recommend this to anyone. It is **escapism at its best.***

Humaira Kauser

Riveting and kept me on edge.

This was such a tense read. I loved how it kept me guessing and on my toes the whole time. When I put it down I was constantly thinking about it, thinking of possible theories and such. Thoroughly enjoyed it and can't wait to continue the series!

https://www.instagram.com/cookie_bookie/

Helen Lowry

I must admit to finding the opening chapters of this book a bit confusing and rushed. However, my advice is stick with it and it becomes a very enjoyable read.

The book has three main plots from child sex abuse to severed feet and a personal story of our main character - Cal McGill - a wrong-doing done to his grandfather who died in the sea Cal so loves. He is an oceanographer, one who spends his time studying currents, winds and shipping records.

As the book unfolds, the three plots all come together. They are helped by several characters including McGill and two very opposite police detectives. One, DI Ryan, who thinks he's the be all and end all, both to the police force and all women. The second, DC Jamieson, a plain, but very smart up and coming detective who outwits Ryan superbly.

*All the characters were believable and played their part in the enjoyment of the book. **There is enough going on, with the background history of the island families, the characters and the Scottish scenery to keep your interest and I do recommend this book.** I will be aiming to read the next book in the series.*

Nicola Kingswell

Intelligent Scottish detective thriller.

I read a lot of crime thrillers and am always on the lookout for something different. Mark Douglas-Home doesn't disappoint with 'The Sea Detective'. The lead character, Cal McGill is an environmentalist, oceanography student and

owner of Flotsam and Jetsam investigations. His speciality is the ability to trace where objects washed up on the shoreline have come from. He comes to the attention of the police through his planting of arctic plants in the gardens of important Scottish MP's. DC Helen Jamieson enlists Cal to help with the discovery of severed feet on beaches miles apart. Meanwhile, Cal's ex-wife Rachel contacts him with news about his grandfather's death in World War II.

The investigations of Cal's grandfather and the severed feet are cleverly interwoven to reveal stories of betrayal, cover-ups and people trafficking, with Cal's investigations at the heart of it all. I really enjoyed this novel. It was very well written, with interesting characters. I will definitely read more by Mark Douglas-Home and look forward to more Cal McGill investigations.

Susan Burton

Well written and graphical book.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book especially liked the main character Cal. I must be honest I knew nothing at all about Oceanology but was fascinated and the descriptions were very graphical and also written in a way that I understood what was meant. Well worth a read.

Lynne Morgan

This story is a great detective mystery, but with so much more to offer.

Mark Douglas-Home transports you from the exotic colour of India, to the wild shores of Scotland's islands. Always at the heart of the story is the sea, linking lives – and deaths, and washing up mysteries.

Cal McGill is an oceanographer and environmentalist, his detailed knowledge of the ocean currents makes him a very special investigator, he can track objects found at sea and help solve where they have come from – including severed feet! But his environmental beliefs often put him on the wrong side of the law, and he ends up under investigation himself.

Undeterred, he battles on, and uncovers an unscrupulous criminal underworld of violence and abuse. His pursuit for justice extends to his own family, and he works tirelessly to clear the name of his grandfather.

In his writing, Mark Douglas-Home leads you to the very heart of his characters, evoking their feelings so accurately that you feel them yourselves.

I really enjoyed reading this book, it is so well written, full of

suspense and mystery – I would recommend it to everyone!

Jennifer Moville

This book centres on the main character, Cal McGill. He is an oceanographer, an Eco-warrior and a geek with a broken marriage behind him. Throughout the story he manages to get himself in all sorts of situations, being arrested for trespass, befriending a homeless girl and investigating feet washed up on two different islands.

I think this book easily gives away the villain but maybe that was the author's intent, although the book is still very readable even when you work out whodunit.

The author manages to make this book a contemporary mystery but also parts historical and even with a little humour thrown in.

Phylippa Smithson

Just when you thought the book shelves had all possible types of detectives, up pops Cal McGill, a private investigator with a bias to applying his expertise in oceanography to help solve crime.

At times 'The Sea Detective' makes for a very distressing read. The hard hitting opening chapter introduces two innocent girls from India who have been sold into prostitution by their parents naive to believe the payment they receive in return will see their daughters entering into a life with men respectful and courteous. How wrong could they be?

Interspersed with the harsh reality of the girls' new life, McGill is introduced under very inauspicious and somewhat farcical circumstances when arrested for trespass at the Scottish environmental minister's home for leaving a plant to draw awareness to global warming. When investigated, the case he has been working on (with no association to his environmental efforts) comes to the attention of the police.

He has been looking to see if there are any link between the body parts which have washed up on the beaches of Scotland and those of people reported missing.

And so, rather than be charged for a crime, McGill applies his expertise in helping the police.

For me, the threat of a challenger to Ian Rankin's detective fiction writing

throne is not going to happen but Douglas-Home offers a readable alternative whilst awaiting the compulsive Rebus to return to the shelves.

Jacki Moorcroft

*New style of Detective story. Not a policeman or private investigator, but an oceanographer! **With a brilliantly woven story line, Mark Douglas-Home is definitely a writer to follow.***

Cal McGill, a passionate environmentalist and oceanographer, uses his skills to track where objects which wash ashore have come from or where they have gone. After a run in with the police he is called on quietly to lend a hand with an unusual case of severed feet which wash up on two different islands. In addition his ex-wife brings up his families past whilst researching a documentary leading him to discover hidden secrets and the wrath of the locals and finally a young girl escapes from an underage sex ring and seeks him out after seeing her friend photograph pinned to a wall in his house in a newspaper photograph.

*All these themes are skilfully woven together in **a thoughtful and compelling story leaving you wanting more, highly recommended** and can't wait for the next instalment.*

Twitter @moorcoftj

Kathryn Whitfield

Exciting mystery with a unique storyline.

*I loved this book. A storyline I wasn't sure was going to work but it does. I really enjoyed Cal 's family story, it was very moving and I felt this could have been a book on its own but the author adds two other stories to the mix and they are like an added bonus. The author does a fantastic job of bringing them all together. **I have never read anything like it before, will definitely be reading the next book.***

Twitter @kathreenieA

Dana Captainino

***This is the best book I have read in ages. It is different, exciting and keeps you on tenterhooks right until the end.** The author weaves together a string of storylines with the sea running through these as a theme.*

The book begins in India where two young girls are being prepared for dhanda - the sex trade. This seems to have little to do with the central character Cal McGill an Edinburgh-based oceanographer; with an environmentally excused penchant for guerrilla gardening. This soon gets him into trouble with the police but his specialist knowledge and marine detective skills make it difficult for them to pursue this as they realise how useful he is to helping them solve the very real crime facing them.

Using his skills and knowledge of the ocean currents, tides and using shipping records Cal is in a unique position to accurately track where gruesome and mysterious flotsam and jetsam washed up on the shore have come from. One of the main storylines involves the mystery of two severed feet washed up on different islands off the coast of Scotland.

Cal, using a network of online experts across the world probes further to uncover a spider's web of exploitation, deceit and violence dating back to the Second World War and involving Cal's own family and brings it right back to date where finally all threads of the web join to reveal the truth.

Glenda Worth

'The Sea Detective' was a great read with an unusual investigator whose knowledge is based around oceanography, currents, winds and shipping records. The story investigates corruption and violence.

'The Sea Detective' is based around Cal McGill a Scottish oceanographer who is an unusual investigator using his knowledge of currents prevailing winds and shipping records to solve the mystery of 2 severed feet washed up ashore miles apart.

While doing this he comes into contact with a young Indian girl who has escaped from a life of prostitution and certain death, helping her to find out the fate of her friend and protecting her.

Add into the mix Cal's ex who pops up regularly and the historical tale of Cal's family and the island they inhabited and the book becomes one that can't be put down!

A story of violence and corruption with the exploitation of young girls leads to a brilliant conclusion. I will certainly look out more of this man's work.

Ed Robson

'The Sea Detective' is a decent novel that brings a fresh and interesting angle to crime detection. Cal McGill, oceanographer and environmental activist, looks set to become a regular fixture in this genre

What really works in The Sea Detective is the plot: creating a lead character that uses knowledge of ocean currents to help solve crimes is an interesting basis for a crime fiction novel. Douglas-Home also avoids using scientific oceanography terms which would confuse the uninitiated. Instead, he allows the plot to move swiftly with focus and pace. The Scottish landscape also features and one aspect of the narrative that really works is the sense that McGill, although linked by family to the west coast and an expert in the ways of the sea, is very much an outsider.

*On the negative side, for me the characters feel sadly two-dimensional. Many of the supporting cast are too broadly drawn and the central character of Cal McGill refuses to really get up and walk. The dialogue can feel quite clumsy at times, with sub-plots that don't add much to the narrative. The main police character feels undeveloped but I would expect her to feature in future Sea Detective novels (the suggestion is pretty strong) so perhaps we'll see a more rounded personality emerge. **Overall, I'm glad I read it – but I'm not tempted to seek out the next Cal McGill novel in the series.***

Maz Tucker

Great book, never read any of this author before, but I really enjoyed this and will go and look for some of his other books.

The story was fast paced and kept you wondering what would happen next. The characters were really brought to life and you felt you wanted to give them your support. Really enjoyed this and will be looking for the author's other books.