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Watching the Dark, by Peter Robinson, William Morrow/Harper
Collins, 2012

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Recommended Readings



Watching the Dark

by Peter Robinson, William Morrow/Harper Collins, 2012

Reviewed by Larry Riggs

Part of the appeal of Robinson's Alan Banks mysteries, for me, is the landscape of the North Yorkshire moors and dales in which much of Banks' work is done. In this latest entry, the 20th Banks novel, however, Banks spends a good deal of time in Talinn, Estonia, investigating the 6-year-old cold case of a young Englishwoman. This is a case that seems to be linked to the murder of a respected Yorkshire police officer. Bill Quinn, the murdered detective, had gone to Estonia to observe the investigation of the Englishwoman's disappearance and had remained strangely preoccupied with that case. Quinn was shot with a crossbow on the grounds of a rest and convalescence facility for injured and troubled officers. Banks' investigation of Quinn's murder is complicated by the presence of a beautiful female Professional Standards officer, whose job is to follow up on vague suspicions that Quinn was somehow corrupted. When compromising photos of Quinn and an unidentified young woman are found among the officer's belongings, the suspicions become more specific. While Banks and the Professional Standards officer are in Talinn, looking for the links between the two cases, Banks' long-time partner, Annie Cabot, now recovered from the wounds she received at the end of the previous Banks story, follows the Yorkshire case into the world of people-trafficking, loan-sharking, extortion, and what amounts almost to slavery. Like all of Robinson's books, this is a worthwhile read, but I missed the North Yorkshire atmospheric.

- Larry Riggs is Professor of French at Butler University.