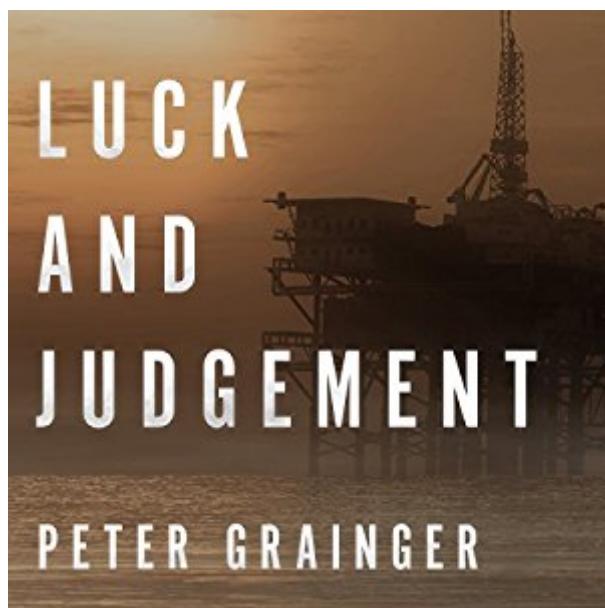


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Luck And Judgement: A DC Smith Investigation Series, Book 3



Synopsis

When a worker goes missing from a North Sea gas platform, there seem to be just two possible explanations - it was a tragic accident or a suicide. It does not take Smith and his detectives long, however, to discover that James Bell led a double life back onshore in Kings Lake, a life complicated enough to make him at least one dangerous enemy. Before the case can be unraveled, Smith must get a new team working together; Waters and Murray are still there, but one of Wilson's men is transferred to him, and the female detective constable from Longmarsh poses some unexpected problems for her new sergeant. Together they begin to investigate the links between the companies and the people that bring ashore the oil and gas, and they also find themselves caught up in the seamier side of life that exists beneath Lake's everyday comings and goings. Jo Evison begins to delve more deeply into the story of the Andretti murders, and Smith himself has to face the fact that he might no longer be considered fit for duty.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Another DC Smith investigation beginning this time with what seems to be a probable accident at an off shore gas rig. Jimmy Bell flew on to the rig two days later than scheduled after texting that he had a 24 hour bug, but disappeared a few hours later before his shift was due to start. No one remembers seeing him, and there is only blurred image of him on security footage. Serious Crime Unit and local CID are sent out to check. When it appears not to be a terrorist attack, SCU leaves the follow up investigation to CID in the persons of Sergeant Smith and his rookie DC Waters. If you

have read the two previous books in the series, you'll know that Smith rarely finds routine "accidental" deaths are really that simple. To the dismay of his Superintendent, he is like a terrier smelling a rat. His DI and his team trust his instincts. This is truly a police procedural - the story follows the team as they go through all the work entailed in building the case. Along the way this time Smith has to work two new members into the team. He also has to worry about his future on the force - will his bad knee mean he can't pass the fitness test coming up which would give his Superintendent the excuse to make him retire? We learn a bit more about the complex Smith and his team members in between bits of the investigation, but I don't feel that these more personal moments slow the pace of the story, rather that they flesh out the day's events as well as the characters. These books are not about car chases, gun battles or violent thugs, more about how things can get out of control with unexpected consequences and how an intelligent, thoughtful policeman can work to bring at least some bit of justice to the victim and the family that are collateral damage. I know some readers prefer more action, but I find the working of the cases in these books to be very satisfying. I have read all three books in the last two days and nights because I really became interested in the characters as well as the individual cases. I couldn't put them down, I wanted to know what happened and how Smith would get his results. You don't have to have read the first two books to enjoy this one, but I would recommend that you do so in order to get a better understanding of the characters and their relationships.

As a dedicated fan of Peter Grainger's work, I was delighted to find a third installment with this British detective "that looked most like an indifferently successful vacuum cleaner salesman" according to one potential suspect. DC Smith is a warm, funny, intuitive detective who is relentless when chasing the truth and fearless in executing his duty. On page one we join Smith on a harrowing (to him) helicopter ride out to a gas rig in the North Sea where it appears a roustabout has disappeared off the platform. Tiny clues others might miss along with his vast experience of human nature convince Smith this was neither accident nor suicide. The author weaves a complex plot and tightens the suspense as the threads of ever-increasing evidence are followed to find out what really happened to James Bell. In quieter moments we discover a bit more about the past and current worries of the dedicated detective. Familiar characters and a new face on the force enhance the story with fresh dialogue and humor. I could see DC Smith becoming the newest detective to be showcased on a BBC or PBS crime series. I would love that! C. Bishop

P. Khaw's comments earlier today have taken the words right out of my mouth. I'll quote them

below, and the only difference in my situation is that I have now read five of Grainger's DC Smith books in a week. Khaw says, "This is the third book by Grainger that I have bought and read in the past week. I'm hooked. DC Smith harks back to an older style of police investigations. TV shows would have you believe that forensics are everything in a police investigation. A lot of the human factor gets left out, the luck, judgement, and intuition that makes some cops so good at their jobs. The characterisations are well drawn and the plots believable. I enjoy good writing. Pace and language are missing among many newer authors. I am always sad when I come close to the end."

Peter Grainger is like a really good magician conjuring what appears to be a very simple trick; but which draws you in so that you have to see for yourself just how it's done. Every so subtle, he is. I was a bit disappointed that he left this book a bit unfinished--did Smith eventually manage to find the evidence to charge the bad guy, or didn't he? Maybe he'll tie things up in a future book? Anyway, I was quite willing to follow wherever led by this author, his protagonist. and all the other characters who play an important part in each story. Although the books probably can stand alone, I think a read will enjoy each more if they start with the very first one.

Detective Sergeant Smith from Kings Lake, a small town in England, doesn't believe that the missing James Bell just fell into the sea and disappeared while working on a gas rig in the North Sea. And what about Bell's wife and daughter? Why are they living in the crime-ridden high-rise Towers while Bell sported stylish, expensive clothes and spent nights at the exclusive swingers-only Velvet Club? Talk about double lives--DC Smith is struggling with his own, like trying to hide his bum knee and pass the physical so he won't be pensioned off by his Superintendent who can't wait to get rid of his maverick officer. This is the third marvelous DC Smith Investigation mystery--the first is An Accidental Death, and the second is But for the Grace. There are five books in all and they can be read as stand-alones, but it's best to read them in order because Smith never forgets or stops caring, and he'll remember or check up on someone from a former book, their stories running through the rest of the books like a half-remembered song from some other time, some other place.

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