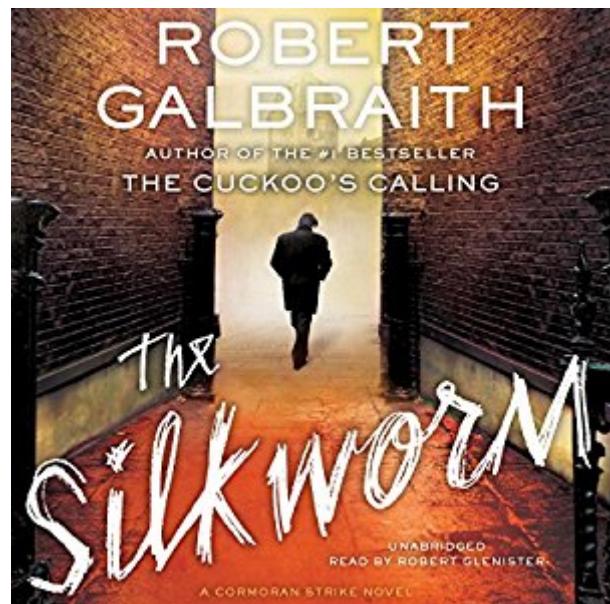


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The Silkworm



Synopsis

Private investigator Cormoran Strike returns in a new mystery from Robert Galbraith, author of the number-one international best seller *The Cuckoo's Calling*. When novelist Owen Quine goes missing, his wife calls in private detective Cormoran Strike. At first, Mrs. Quine just thinks her husband has gone off by himself for a few days - as he has done before - and she wants Strike to find him and bring him home. But as Strike investigates, it becomes clear that there is more to Quine's disappearance than his wife realizes. The novelist has just completed a manuscript featuring poisonous pen-portraits of almost everyone he knows. If the novel were to be published, it would ruin lives - meaning that there are a lot of people who might want him silenced. When Quine is found brutally murdered under bizarre circumstances, it becomes a race against time to understand the motivation of a ruthless killer, a killer unlike any Strike has encountered before... A compulsively listenable crime novel with twists at every turn, *The Silkworm* is the second in the highly acclaimed series featuring Cormoran Strike and his determined young assistant, Robin Ellacott.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I adored the first book, so I had high hopes for this one. I mean, really, really high hopes. I arranged my entire week around reading it so that once I started, I wouldn't have to put it down. This is always a dangerous endeavor, because if the book turns out to be less good than I hoped, I'm deeply disappointed. As you can guess by the title of this review, quite the opposite occurred. In my opinion,

Galbraith's greatest strength is the ability to build believable, unique characters who are realistic and have distinct speaking styles. Well, that and stunningly good prose. It isn't necessary to read *The Cuckoo's Calling* first, but I think it's a good idea. This book begins a few months after the last one left off, and the relationships have progressed accordingly. There aren't particular heroes or villains, just real people who are good and bad, kind and mean, ugly and pretty -- where none of those three things necessarily correspond to any of the others. In any case, Strike and Robin are going about their normal business, with all the usual small misunderstandings and unexpected skills, etc. that go along with most working relationships. Then, when Strike is exhausted and not thinking clearly, he takes on a new client, a rather worn-looking middle-aged woman who wants him to find her husband and thinks it'll be a short, simple job, and she's sure someone else will pay his bill. Ah hah. Sure that's how it's going to work. And so our story kicks off. Oh, I should add -- I am a professional editor and a very prolific reader. Of the dozens of new books I've read so far this year, this is the best.

This is another very good effort from JKR in the detective fiction milieu. Cormoran Strike grows on you pretty quickly. In this caper he's attempting to find the murderer of an odious novelist, the identity of whom could be any number of the unpleasant victim's unpleasant friends, editors, agents, publishers or other unsavory players in the publishing world. While it's easy to dislike many of the other characters in *The Silkworm*, it's only because Rowling does such a terrific job depicting them. It seems rather to be the point. The relationships between each of these appalling people are discovered and revealed with surprising twists, allowing them to show off a deep variety of reprehensible, sad and sometimes kinky personality traits. We also get to know more of Strike's back story, which is interesting, and are introduced more thoroughly to his assistant, Robin, and her family, which is also interesting. Both Strike and Robin have complicated personal lives and these are expressed with sympathy and intelligence. All the while, Strike limps back and forth around London, putting together the pieces of an especially nasty homicide. I disagree with those folks who say the book drags (although, ironically, this novel concerning the London publishing scene could do with some editing - it's a bit long). There's a lot going on, the pacing is excellent, the twists and turns are exciting. Rowling's gift for dialogue is tremendous, too. She certainly knows her way around profanity. On the down side, the discoveries made by our hero Strike are tenuous and difficult to swallow. A few of the leads go nowhere and are unceremoniously dropped. The usual suspects are well known by the time the killer is identified - at which point it doesn't really matter which one of them did the deed because they're such an interchangeably awful bunch. The way the facts of the crime are surmised and then confirmed seems improbable and contrived. Strike doesn't

solve his whodunits with old fashioned logic and deductive reasoning. Instead, he has a highly developed sense of suspicion that leads him to impossibly coincidental hunches that just happen to be spot on. Lastly, as in this novel's predecessor, a well-constructed build-up is let down by another dubious, anti-climactic reveal scene. Still, *The Silkworm* is a very good, gory story that's a lot of fun to read. The arrival is something of a let-down but the journey is well worth the trip. As with the HP books, this novel takes care to acknowledge the previous one and anticipate the next. There are very promising developments between Strike and the increasingly-lovable Robin, which bodes well for the future of this series. Hopefully, the payoff will be up to par with the delivery next time out.

I enjoyed "The Cuckoo's Calling" and was eager for the reappearance of protagonist sleuth Cormoran Strike. What I deduce from "The Silkworm" is that Ms. Rowling seems to have achieved such stratospheric fame that no editor will favor her with the revision this novel so desperately needs. His amputated leg hurts. I get it. It's miserable winter weather. I get it. He has unresolved issues with his former fiancee. I get it. I am not permitted not to get it. I found that 450 pages of numbing repetitive detail reduced the plot to a plod. It was fortunate the suspects did not succumb to old age before the climax. In future installments--and I trust there will be several--I would love to see Cormoran Strike liberated to get on with his job. He's too satisfying a character to languish like this.

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The Silkworm The Silkworm (Cormoran Strike)

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