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Posted on 25 February 2019 By Ann Cleeves

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2017 UPDATE So there s this BBC TV series and this book out of order, why do producers do that gets the business in it The series isn t faithful to the books, but it s good

anyway. Rating 4 very very disgruntled stars of five

The Publisher Says In the fourth book of Ann Cleeves critically acclaimed series set in the Shetland Islands, Detective Inspector Jimmy Perez brings his fianc e home to Fair Isle, a birder s paradise, where strangers are viewed with suspicions and distrust When a woman s body is discovered at the island s bird observatory, the investigation is hampered by a raging storm that renders the island totally isolated Jimmy has to find clues the old fashioned way, and he has to do it quickly There s a killer on the island just waiting for the chance to strike again.

My Review Jimmy and Fran go to visit Jimmy s parents, Big James and Mary, on Fair Isle, since they re planning to be married Big James and Mary make a nice engagement party for the happy couple at the North Light, which now serves as the centerpiece of a birding reserve and research center Maurice and Angela, who run the reserve, have attracted the best chef ever in the form of Jane, a lesbian escapee from life shectic and less forgiving pace in London Throw in some birders, a weird subspecies of Homo obsessivus, a misery of a teenaged daughter, a snotty young upperclass Brit twit, and some genuinely surprising revelations about the families and lives of the characters we who are fans have come to love, and then drumroll please kill off an extremely main character for absolutely avoidable reasons and throw the entire cast of characters into a major tumult, and you have book four of the Shetland Islands Quartet.

Oh, owww I thought Lousy Louise Penny had hurt me as badly as a novelist could with her perfidious, horrible, and completely unforgiven emotional drubbing in book 5 of Three Pines I suppose I should have been on the alert for a similar anguishing event because Lousy Louise herself blurbed this book I was, however, all padded up in cotton wool, interestedly following Jimmy around his hometown Fair Isle, meeting and tutting over the characters who are slated to die I had my murderer all picked out I was right and I was practically drooling with eagerness to see my candidate suffer, be blamed, pay for a horrible crime, a forgivable one too though honestly had the first murder gone unpunished I wouldn t ve been even a little fussed about it and then BLAMMO right between the eyes, smash went the skull with a twist I did NOT see coming and then, and then Cleeves kicked me square in the teeth with the ending I cried I was very upset I felt I d been hurt in my real life It takes a good, good storyteller to make that happen. These are well written books, and they convey a clear sense of life in the Shetland Islands They re very much worth reading on that basis alone But Cleeves creates characters that are deeply real, ones you can invest in, and that s the most important quality a writer can have I strongly recommend the books This one, obviously, should be saved for last I suspect, though, given the last few lines of the book, that Cleeves s publishers have prevailed upon her to make the Quartet open ended I am not at all sure I think that s a good thing, if it s true Still, I hope you will go and procure them for your reading pleasure, because it will be a pleasure. By the time I started reading Blue Lightning, I was engaged in the story of Jimmy Perez and Fran Hunter that was what kept me reading the books, that was what I was invested in The Shetland books themselves, are at times frustratingly slow, and this one suffers from that

Raven Black is the best of the books for pacing. You get so little for so long, then Jane dies, then again little happens. The thing that kept my attention was the character interaction and the differing views on Jimmy, the impact of a murder happening when he's home and meant to be celebrating. This is all overshadowed by a weak, rushed ending. Ultimately, I expected the ending the chosen narrative track for the Shetland quartet is Jimmy Perez meets Fran Hunter, falls in love, commits, then loses her. It doesn't work for me. In fact, it's the most frustrating part of reading the books, getting invested, hoping that they wouldn't fall to the trope, then having it do it. Fran Hunter, to use comic book born phrasing, gets fridged at the end of Blue Lightning. Her death does not serve the narrative. It doesn't add anything. All it does is inspire Jimmy's man pain. There is little I dislike than the woman dying to inspire change and heart ache in their man. In all but Red Bones there is a threat play in the narrative in regards to Fran, she could be next, but isn't. You get to Blue Lightning, and besides her presence on the island, and connection to Perez, there is no reason to suspect she will die, apart from the constant foreshadowing in the previous books. Add in the fact that Jane and Fran are both killed for playing detective and when there are others who could have acted to save them is annoying, because it plays into the kind of anti active women tropes that exist far too much. Why couldn't the trope have been turned and Fran have presented the answer. Why couldn't poor Sarah get some strength in the end. Fran could have actually been an active partner for the first time in the books, instead of Perez's fantasy. Or if you wanted to explore real tragedy, given the thing about a baby, Fran could have survived but with consequences. So much is raised but not dealt with in this story, much of it relating to women and their power over their lives. Ultimately, Jimmy and Fowler are the ones with the power and Big James while the women get to be the passive participants in the story. Fowler kills Fran as a last power play effectively. The last twenty pages of the book suddenly throw together something resembling an ending, that isn't satisfying, and lacks the charm of the previous books. I will be reading Dead Water at some point but my interest in Jimmy Perez's story has faded, with the key driving relationship dead. Poor Jimmy Perez can't even travel home to introduce his fiancée to his parents without someone gets murdered and since he is the only cop there, and it's bad weather and no one can get there and no one can get off the island, he has to solve the murder. A bit like Midsomer Murders, on an island, with a lot of suspects. And, of course, with a lot of suspects with motives. Was I surprised how good this book was? Hell yes, the previous three books can't compare to how intense this book was, or perhaps it all has to do with how surprising the ending was. Anyway, I felt that I needed a decent crime novel to read and since I have somehow missed reading this one, I thought, why not. I didn't think that I would get sucked into the story and spend a good part of Saturday reading it. I like Jimmy Perez, I like that he is a bit old fashioned, that he is thoughtful. He gets the job done. But this time, well, it's a tough case for him. It was a really good crime novel and I can't wait to read the next one. The Shetland quartet comes to a close in Anne Cleeves Blue Lightning, and it's

end is a satisfying blend of tragic mystery and hope, perfectly suited to that ever present character in these novels the gray winds, clouds and seas of the Shetland Isles Of course, there are further books now, but Blue Lightning is the last of the original set and yes, I shall be looking out for Characters have been built up over the sequence of novels Now there are plans for the future in the air, families to meet, obligations, relationships, hopes And, of course, there s mystery But Jimmy Perez is at his childhood home on Fair Isle in this tale, with limited technology and communication He really wanted to spendtime with his fiancée, who is fast becoming friends with his family. But fractured relationships, splintering trust and frayed tempers combine with mystery and intrigue to keep them apart. As usual, readers and protagonists come slowly to the truth of things, while a murderer seems almost to get away Blue Lightning is probably best read in sequence with the other novels, not because it doesn t stand alone it does, beautifully , but because it gives away too much, tying books to the later TV series, and because it s d nouement is so beautifully and hauntingly drawn on the past I love this quartet. Disclosure Now I want to buy AARRGGHHH I was SO looking forward to this book As the fourth and final book in a quartet of books set in the Shetland Islands, the author was supposed to tie things up neatly and leave the reader satisfied For the first 326 pages, I thought she was going to do that and then, she sucked the life right out of the book for me SOOO disappointing I m not sure if the ending has left the possibility that the author will continue with the same main character but even if she does, I m not certain I trust her enough to read any .

FROM THE INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER



Ann
Cleeves

BLUE LIGHTNING

wish I could give this book six stars I have no idea why Ann Cleeves isn't famous She is an exceptional story teller This latest book was an absolute masterpiece Everyone should read her books. This book is the fourth in her Shetland Island series Her character development is deep without becoming boring, the plot flows perfectly without seeming contrived I am always disappointed when her books end I can't wait for the next one FYI She has a series about a couple who are bird watchers many of her books involve bird watching to some degree I admit, bird watching isn't exactly my thing, so it's been a bit of a turn off However, she is so good I'm going to try to overlook the birding and read that series. I don't think I'm in a fit state of mind to really review this book, so I'll keep it brief Fair Isle during a powerful gale is the atmospheric backdrop to the scene of multiple murders Jimmy works the case, but in this one he has a very personal stake I am wrung out after reading this one it's fitting that the victims were run through with a knife, because that's just about how I feel now Right through the heart But damn Anne Cleeves just does it so well. &READ E-PUB ? Blue Lightning ? Shetland Detective Jimmy Perez Knows It Will Be A Difficult Homecoming When He Returns To The Fair Isles To Introduce His Fiancee, Fran, To His Parents When A Woman's Body Is Discovered At The Renowned Fair Isles Bird Observatory, Jimmy Must Investigate The Old Fashioned Way I've loved Ann Cleeves I've loved the Shetland Mysteries. And I loved this one right up till the final 20 pages, when a plot twist so irritating ruined the whole thing Ugh. I have to admit I'm disappointed in this book although I really enjoyed the series overall I disliked the ending and it felt like some of the decisions made were just really stupid and didn't make sense when there's a murderer among a small group of people Good writing although it moves a bit slowly but I found that to be typical in this series I probably will pick up the next one eventually.

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