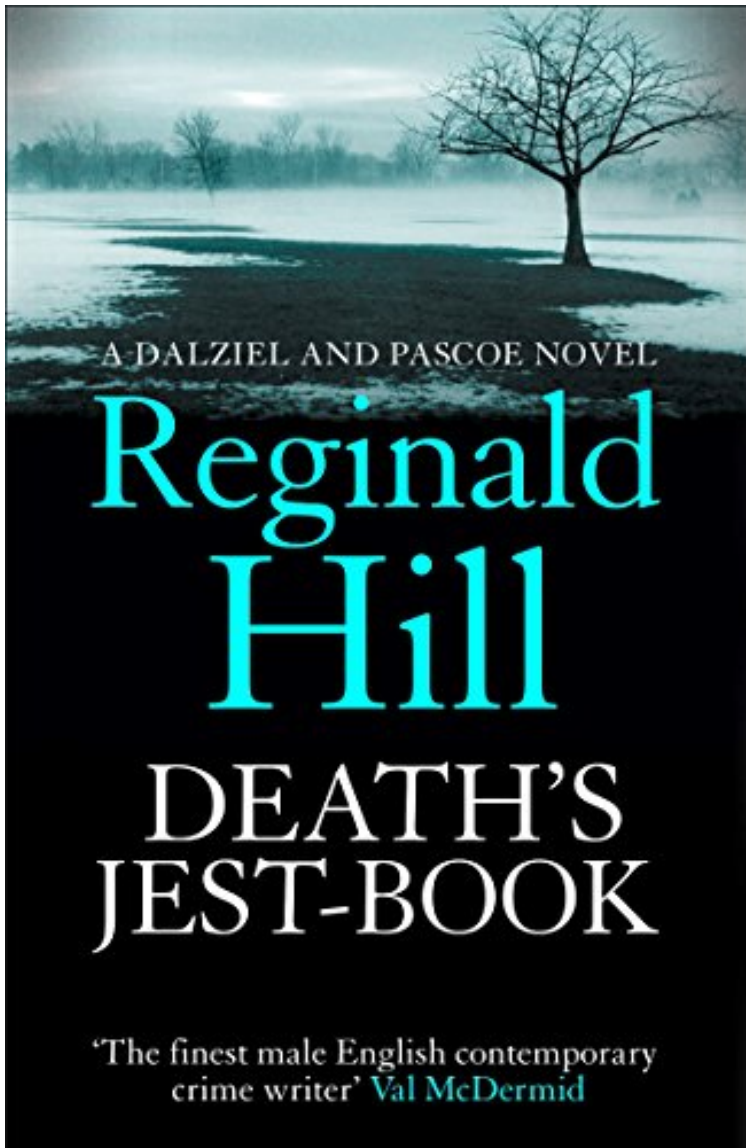


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Deaths Jest-Book (Dalziel Pascoe, Book 18)



Par Reginald Hill
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurReginald Hills best-selling duo, Dalziel and Pascoe, return in this brilliant, complex and ultimately moving crime novel: Reginald Hill is probably the best living crime writer in the English-speaking world IndependentEx-convict and aspiring academic, Franny Roote, has started writing enigmatic letters to DCI Peter Pascoe who immediately smells a rat. DS Edgar Wield, intervening in a suspected kidnapping, takes a vulnerable rentboy under his wing, one who is hiding an earth-shattering secret. And young DC Bowler is looking forward to a weekend away with his girlfriend but her dreams are filled with a horror too terrifying to share.Detective Chief Superintendent Andy Dalziel, lording it over his team, is famed for his omniscience. But even he is unable to foresee the disaster towards which they are all

tumbling
Extrait | The Physician Imagined Scenes from AMONG OTHER THINGS: The Quest for Thomas Lovell Beddoes by Sam Johnson MA, PhD (first draft) Clifton, Glos. June 1808
That's it, man. Hold her head, hold her head. For God's sake, you behind, get your shoulder into it. Come, girl. Come, girl. The shouter of these instructions, a burly man of about fifty years with a close-cropped head and a face made to command, stands halfway up a broad sweeping staircase. A few stairs below him a rustic, his naturally ruddy complexion even more deeply incarnadined by exertion, is leaning backwards like the anchor in a tug-o-war, pulling with all his strength on a rope whose lower end is tied round the neck of a large brown cow. Behind the beast a nervous-looking footman is making encouraging fluttering gestures with his hands. From the marble-floored hallway below a housekeeper and butler watch with massive disapproval, while over the balustrade of the landing lean a pair of housemaids, arms full of sheets, all discipline forgotten, their faces bright with delight at this rare entertainment, and especially at the discomfiture of the footman. Between them kneels a solemn-faced little boy, his hands gripping the gilded wrought iron rails, who observes the scene with keen but unsurprised gaze. Push, man, push, it can't bite you! roars the burly man. The footman, used to obey and perhaps aware of the watching maids, takes a step forward and leans with one hand on each of the cow's haunches. As if stimulated by the pressure, the beast raises its tail and evacuates its bowels. Caught full in the chest by the noxious jet, the footman tumbles backwards, the maids squeal, the little boy smiles to see such fun, and the cow as if propelled by the exuberance of its own extravasation bounds up the remaining stairs at such a pace that both the rustic and the burly man are hard put to retreat safely to the landing. Below, the butler and the housekeeper check that the bemired footman is unhurt. Then the woman hastens up the stairs, her face dark with indignation, which the maids observing, they beat a hasty retreat. Dr Beddoes! she cries. This is beyond toleration! Come now, Mrs Jones, says the burly man. Is not your mistress's health worth a little labour with brush and pan? Lead her on, George. The rustic begins to lead the now completely cowed cow along the landing towards a half-open bedroom door. The man follows, with the small boy a step behind. Mrs Jones, the housekeeper, finding no answer to the doctor's reproof, changes her line of attack. A sick room is certainly no place for a child, she proclaims. What would his mother say? His mother, ma'am, being a woman of good sense and aware of her duty, would say that his father knows best, observes the doctor sardonically. A child's eye sees the simple facts of things. It is old wives' fancies that give them the tincture of horror. My boy has already looked unmoved on sights which have sent many a strapping medical student tumbling into the runnel. I will stand him in good stead if he chooses to follow his father's example. Come, Tom. So saying, he takes the boy by the hand and, passing in front of the cow and its keeper, he pushes open the bedroom door. This is a large room in the modern airy style, but rendered dark by heavily draped windows and illumined only by a single taper whose glim picks out the features of a figure lying in a huge square bed. It is a woman, old, sunken cheeked, eyes closed, pale as candle wax, and showing no sign of life. By the bedside kneels a thin black-clothed man who looks up as the door opens and slowly rises. You're too late, Beddoes, he says. She is gone to her maker. That's your professional opinion, is it, Padre? says the doctor. Well, let's see. He goes to the window and pulls aside the drapes, letting in the full beam of a summer sun. In its light he stands looking down at the old woman, with his hand resting lightly on her neck. Then he turns and calls, George, don't hang back, man. Lead her in. The rustic advances with the cow. The parson cries, Nay, Beddoes, this is unseemly. This is not well done! She is at peace, she is with the angels. The doctor ignores him. Helped by the rustic and observed with wide unblinking eyes by his son, he manoeuvres the cow's head over the still figure in the bed. Then he punches the beast lightly in the stomach so that it opens its jaws and exhales a great gust of grassy breath directly into the woman's face. Once, twice, three times he does this, and on the third occasion the cow's long wet tongue licks lightly over the pallid features. The woman opens her eyes. Perhaps she expects to see angels, or Jesus, or even the ineffable glory of the Godhead itself. Instead what her dim vision discovers is a gaping maw beneath broad flaring nostrils, all topped by a pair of sharp pointed horns. She shrieks and sits bolt upright. The cow retreats, the doctor puts a supporting arm round the woman's shoulders. Welcome back, my lady. Will you take a little nourishment? Her gaze clearing and the agitation fading from her features, she nods feebly and the doctor eases her back on to her pillows. Take Betsy out, George, says Beddoes. Her work is done. And to his son he says, You see how it is, young Tom. The parson here preaches miracles. We lesser men have to practise them. Mrs Jones, a little nourishing broth for your mistress, if you please. From the Hardcover edition. *Revue de presse* Hills novels are really dances to the music of time, his heroes and villains interconnecting, their stories entwining. -- Ian Rankin An increasingly lyrical and always humorous writer. . . Hill is blessed with a spontaneous storytelling gift. -- Frances Fyfield Reginald Hill is probably the best living male crime writer in

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