

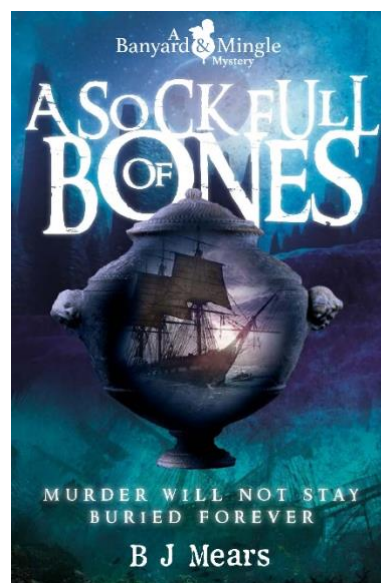
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A SOCK FULL OF BONES

By Ben J Mears

Press Release

Set in an altered, two-class world. Unique dystopian-Victorian background. Fascinating combination of detection, crime and fantasy. First in a new series. Features roguish, lovable private detectives. Tackles relevant social issues.



Young private detectives, Banyard and Mingle, are out of money and out of luck when a swindled widow presents a life-changing case. As clues reveal a treacherous shipwreck and a rotting corpse in a cage, they are confronted by brutal smugglers and ghoulish gawpers in a mystery that could cost them their lives. However, in a dystopian-Victorian world of slavery and greed, it is not just the criminals they will have to fight.

In this two-class society, the 'silkers' rule over the 'threaders', making them little more than slaves. Few appear to see the cruelty and injustice, but Michael Banyard is different. He longs for change and will do everything in his power to aid the threaders, selecting those in the direst of circumstances for his secret philanthropy. If caught, he will hang.

Behind this backdrop, the gawpers menace. Creatures of myth and fairy tale, they arise from the night mists, ghost-like, tall and dark; their humanoid shapes drifting yet leaving no trace. They gawp at their victims with blank faces and piercing eyes of white flame, reading their minds and weighing their thoughts. Those found wanting, beware! It is said the gawpers are harbingers of doom, yet only those who have encountered them and survived truly believe in their existence. Will you?

With subjects intensely relevant to the present day, the story focuses on heroics in the face of injustice, abuse, slavery and greed. Where the law favours the rich and condemns the poor, it begs the question, is it always right to follow the law? Can justice prevail when the law itself is corrupt? And how might a sock full of bones help bring it about?

Ben says: 'I began the series to bring together my passions: fantasy, crime detection and relationships. It is a type of fantasy that is rooted in our world and revolves around two people working together against all the odds and overcoming personal differences. It is a story about relationships, saving those enslaved; heroes battling injustice and fighting for change.'

About the author:

Born in Cornwall, Ben first began writing high fantasy as a hobbyist, later working on a series of early-medieval whodunits before self-publishing the YA *Tyler May Series*. In addition to his role as an author, Ben is a published songwriter, a published illustrator and a professional graphic designer. As a visiting author, he runs creative writing workshops in secondary schools and academies. *A Sock Full of Bones* is the first of his novels to be traditionally published. He is married and has three inspiring daughters.

**For review copies and media enquiries contact Nicki Copeland:
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