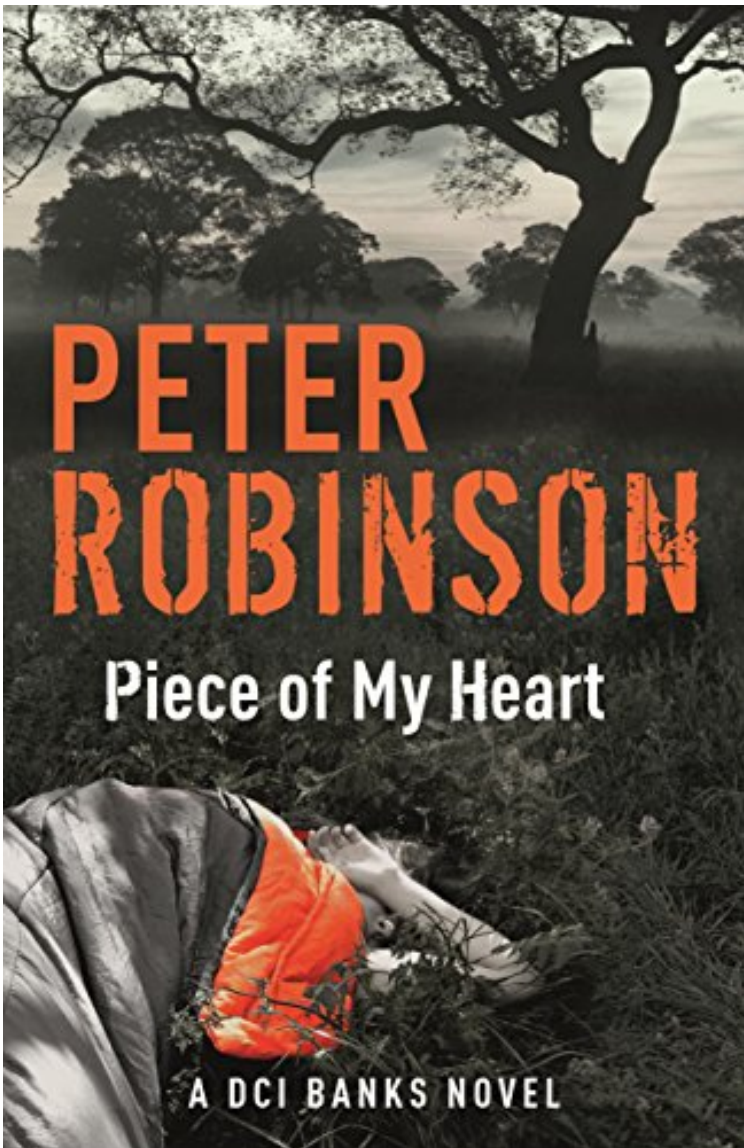


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Piece of My Heart: DCI Banks 16



Par Peter Robinson
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurAs volunteers clean up after a huge outdoor rock concert in Yorkshire in 1969, they discover the body of a young woman wrapped in a sleeping bag. She has been brutally murdered. The detective assigned to the case, Stanley Chadwick, is a hard-headed, strait-laced veteran of the Second World War. He could not have less in common with - or less regard for - young, disrespectful, long-haired hippies, smoking marijuana and listening to the pulsing sounds of rock and roll. But he has a murder to solve, and it looks as if the victim was somehow associated with the up-and-coming psychedelic pastoral band the Mad Hatters. In the present, Inspector Alan Banks is investigating the murder of a freelance music journalist who was working on a feature about the Mad Hatters for MOJO magazine. This is not the first time that the Mad

Hatters, now aging rock superstars, have been brushed by tragedy. Banks finds he has to delve into the past to find out exactly what hornets' nest the journalist inadvertently stirred up. Extrait Monday, September 8, 1969 To an observer looking down from the peak of Brimleigh Beacon early that Monday morning, the scene below might have resembled the aftermath of a battle. It had rained briefly during the night, and the pale sun coaxed tendrils of mist from the damp earth. They swirled over fields dotted with motionless shapes, mingling here and there with the darker smoke of smouldering embers. Human scavengers picked their way through the carnage as if collecting discarded weapons, occasionally bending to extract an object of value from a dead mans pocket. Others appeared to be shovelling soil or quicklime into large open graves. The light wind carried a whiff of rotting flesh. And over the whole scene a terrible stillness reigned. But to Dave Sampson, down on the field, there had been no battle, only a peaceful gathering, and Dave had the worms-eye view. It was just after eight in the morning, and he had been up half the night along with everyone else, listening to Pink Floyd, Fleetwood Mac and Led Zeppelin. Now, the crowd had gone home, and he was moving among the motionless shapes, litter left behind by the vanished hordes, helping to clean up after the very first Brimleigh Festival. Here he was, bent over, back aching like hell, eyes burning with tiredness, plodding across the muddy field picking up rubbish. The eerie sounds of Jimmy Page playing his electric guitar with a violin bow still echoed in his mind as he shoved cellophane wrappers and half-eaten Mars bars into his plastic bag. Ants and beetles crawled over the remains of sandwiches and half-empty tins of cold baked beans. Flies buzzed around the feces and wasps hovered about the necks of empty pop bottles. More than once, Dave had to manoeuvre sharply to avoid being stung. He couldnt believe some of the stuff people left behind. Food wrappers, soggy newspapers and magazines, used Durex, tampons, cigarette ends, knickers, empty beer cans and roaches youd expect, but what on earth had the person who left the Underwood typewriter been thinking of? Or the wooden crutch? Had a cripple, suddenly healed by the music, run off and left it behind? There were other things, too, things best avoided. The makeshift toilets set over the open cesspit had been uninviting, as well as few and far between, and the queues had been long, encouraging more than one desperate person to find a quiet spot elsewhere in the field. Dave glanced towards the craters and felt glad that he wasnt one of the volunteers assigned to fill them up with earth. In an otherwise isolated spot at the southern edge of the field, where the land rose gently towards the fringes of Brimleigh Woods, Dave noticed an abandoned sleeping bag. The closer he got, the more it looked to be occupied. Had someone passed out or simply gone to sleep? More likely, Dave thought, it was drugs. All night the medical tent had been open to people suffering hallucinations from bad acid, and there had been enough Mandrax and opiated hash around to knock out an army. Dave prodded the bag with his foot. It felt soft and heavy. He prodded it again, harder this time. Still nothing. It definitely felt as if someone were inside. Finally, he bent and pulled the zip, and when he saw what was there, he wished he hadnt. Detective Inspector Stanley Chadwick was at his desk in Brotherton House before eight oclock Monday morning, as usual, with every intention of finishing off the paperwork that had piled up during his two weeks annual leave at the end of August. The caravan at Primrose Valley, with Janet and Yvonne, had made a nice haven for a while, but Yvonne was obviously restless, as only a sixteen-year-old on holiday with her parents can be, and crime didnt stop while he was away from Leeds. Nor, apparently, did the paperwork. It had been a good weekend. Yorkshire beat Derbyshire in the Gillette Cup Final, and if Leeds United, coming off a season as league champions, hadnt managed to beat Manchester United at home, at least they had come out of it with a 2-2 draw, and Billy Bremner had scored. The only blot on the landscape was that Yvonne had stayed out most of the night on Sunday, and it wasnt the first time. Chadwick had lain awake until he heard her come in at about half past six, and by then it was time for him to get up and get ready for work. Yvonne had gone straight to her room and closed her door, so he had put off the inevitable confrontation until later, and now it was gnawing at him. He didnt know what was happening to his daughter, what she was up to, but whatever it was, it frightened him. It seemed that the younger generation had been getting stranger and stranger over the past few years, more out of control, and Chadwick seemed unable to find any point of connection with them anymore. Most of them seemed like members of another species to him now. Especially his own daughter. Chadwick tried to shake off his worries about Yvonne and glanced over the crime sheets: trouble with squatters in a Leeds city-centre office building; a big drugs bust in Chapeltown; an assault on a woman with a stone in a sock in Bradford. Manningham Lane, he noticed, and everyone knew what kind of women you found on Manningham Lane. Still, poor cow, nobody deserved to be hit with a stone in a sock. Just over the county border, in the North Riding, the Brimleigh Festival had gone off peacefully enough, with only a few arrests for drunkenness and drug dealing only to be expected at such an

event and a bit of bother with some skinheads at one of the fences. At about half past nine, Chadwick reached for the next file, and he had just opened it when Karen popped her head around his door and told him Detective Chief Superintendent McCullen wanted to see him. Chadwick put the folder back on the pile. If McCullen wanted to see him, it had to be something pretty big. Whatever it was, it was bound to be a lot more interesting than paperwork. From the Hardcover edition. From Publishers Weekly. Det. Insp. Alan Banks investigates the apparently motiveless murder of Nicholas Barber, a rock journalist from London visiting a small town near Banks's Yorkshire police precinct, in Robinson's less-than-stellar 14th novel to feature the Yorkshire police detective. Meanwhile, another mystery unfolds in a parallel narrative, the fatal stabbing of a young woman at a local rock festival back in 1969. Needless to say, the cases are intertwined as Banks puts it, "the past is never over" and part of the pleasure is trying to piece together the links. Unfortunately, Robinson takes too long to connect the two stories, and the earlier thread suffers from the lack of Banks's engaging presence (though it does capture, with great fidelity, that odd mixture of self-absorption and idealism of the late 1960s and the whole hippie/rock music scene). As always, the author's prose is clear, observant and intelligent, but the story itself is not nearly as compelling as 2005's *Strange Affair*. 6-city author tour. (June) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.