

Girl on Fire by Tony Parsons

5 stars

Drones: terrorists' new weapons?

DC Max Wolfe, a member of Homicide and Serious Crime Command, West End Central, had been in the Lake Meadows shopping centre to buy his daughter, Scout, a new backpack, when an air ambulance helicopter crashes into the centre; brought down by a drone. He is lucky to survive the damage and mayhem that results from this crash.

His team is part of a combined police operation, tasked with bringing the killers to justice. They quickly ascertain who the suspects are and Max Wolfe, DC Edie Wren and the new member of the team, TDC Joy Adams are on hand when the armed unit arrives to arrest the two brothers they've identified as the suspects. Unfortunately, Specialist Firearms Officer DS Alice Stone is killed when one of the brothers rushes out of the house they are about to storm, opening fire with an assault rifle.

These two incidents are the beginning of what is going to be the most horrific and hardest case that Max Wolfe, and the other members of the team he is part of, have ever faced.

To make matters worse, Max must deal with losing his daughter Scout. Her mother, Anne, who had left Max and her daughter when she fell in love with another man, severing all ties with both Scout and Max on her departure, insists that Scout should live with her. He takes the line of least resistance, hoping not to cause more unhappiness for his daughter.

This is the fifth book featuring DC Max Wolfe. I've grown to know him, Scout, their beautiful Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Stan, Mrs Murphy, who keeps house for them, and the team he is part of - DCI Whitstone, Edie Wren and the newest member Joy Adams and they feel like an extension of my circle of friends. Because I feel such a close connection to each of them, I take it personally if something happens to one of them as they try to get the "nasties" off the street, more often than not one of them ending up battered and bruised.

Unfortunately, Tony Parsons has ratcheted up the horrors facing not only Max Wolfe but also the team in this book, reducing me to using a box of tissues as I tried to come to terms with the ending.

Tony Parsons must surely be one of the best crime writers around. I think what sets him apart from other writers is that his writing makes you feel as though you're reading Max Wolfe's personal journal because he feels and is so real.

If you're not already a fan, may I suggest that you don't take my word for it but grab the first book in the series, *The Murder Bag*. I can guarantee that reading it will make you keep reading through the series until you end up with this, the latest - "Girl on Fire" - hoping that Max Wolfe is keeping his journal up to date so that we don't have to wait too long before the next "instalment."

Treebeard

Breakaway Reviewers received a copy of the book to review.