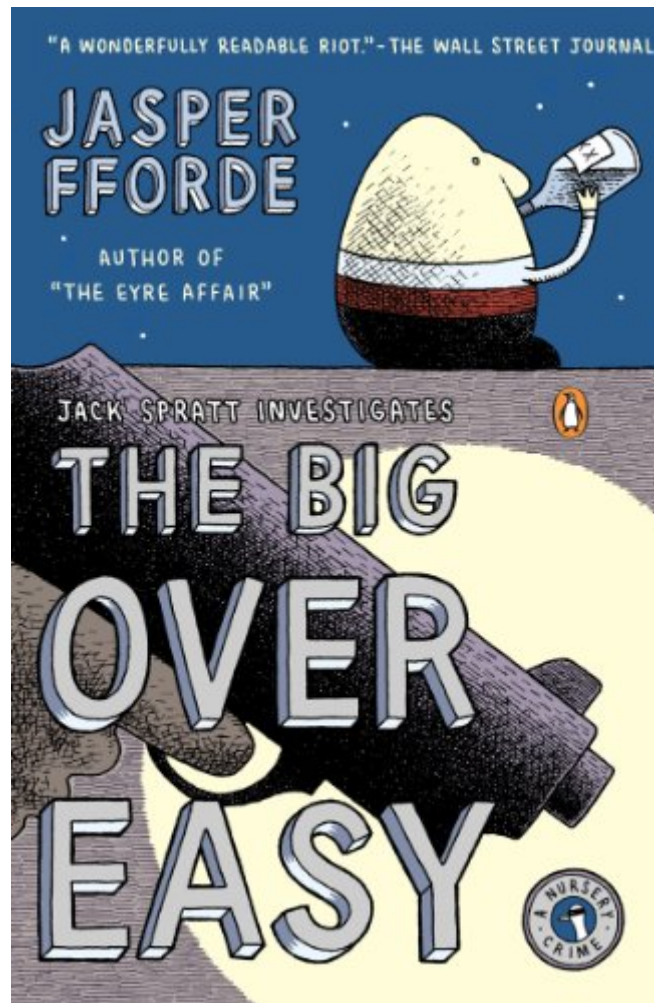




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The Big Over Easy: A Nursery Crime



Synopsis

From the creator of *The Eyre Affair*, enter the world of the Nursery Crime Division. Jasper Fforde's bestselling Thursday Next series has delighted readers of every genre with its literary derring-do and brilliant flights of fancy. In *The Big Over Easy*, Fforde takes a break from classic literature and tumbles into the seedy underbelly of nursery crime. Meet Inspector Jack Spratt, family man and head of the Nursery Crime Division. He's investigating the murder of ovoid D-class nursery celebrity Humpty Dumpty, found shattered to death beneath a wall in a shabby area of town. Yes, the big egg is down, and all those brittle pieces sitting in the morgue point to foul play. "[Fforde] knows a thing or two about leaping into new worlds. . . . It's hard not to see what all the enthusiasm is about." -Janet Maslin, *The New York Times* "A wonderfully readable riot." -*The Wall Street Journal*

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Customer Reviews

The Big Over Easy: A Nursery Crime Hardcover " July 25, 2005 by Jasper Fforde - Police officer Mary Mary get a new career by joining the NCD (Nursery Crime Division) where Jack Spratt is the head. By joining NCD she will get involved in crimes committed by individuals from all kinds of

nursery rhymes. They do exist, you know. In this book you'll meet Humpty Dumpty, or more exact his dead shells. What start as a possible accident/suicide soon begin to look very suspicious with too many question marks. There is an ex wife, ex girlfriends, gold, a totally insane doctor at St. Cerebellum's, titans and a beanstalk. There is Lola Vavoom the former moviestar and there is the Goring Foot Museum. There is so much more, like threads connecting over the pages like a knot being untied in the end, just in time for the holy highness the Jellyman to visit Reading. The book is a typical Jasper Fforde. His remarkable sense of total craziness woven together with some feeling of an 50s detective novel - mixed with humor and all those little figures we know from nursery rhymes. Just we didn't know what crooks they really are! Jasper Fforde always catch my interest from the very first page. that's what he does. And then you just don't want to be disturbed before you've read the whole book. That's the Fforde-mania.

This is a very funny book. Actually, it is hilarious. From a little past midpoint it becomes hysterical and stays that way all the way to the end. Jack Spratt is a flatfoot, a gumshoe, a copper, with a wife and too many kids and not enough money. He is rumpled, unattractive, and somewhat shy. He has managed by sheer dint of longevity to achieve the rank of DI (detective inspector) when he knows he could be a DCI (detective Chief inspector) except he has an outrageously flashy rival who continually steals his cases and his spotlight. DI Spratt runs the only (woefully understaffed and underfunded) department specializing in nursery crimes: that is, crimes committed by and/or against all your favorite nursery rhyme and fairy tale characters. Since the book begins with the investigation into exactly how Humpty Dumpty fell from the wall it's hardly spoilerish to relate that it's DI Jack Spratt and his very reluctant new assistant, DS (detective sergeant) Mary Mary (you read that right) who catch the case, a case that becomes more convoluted and confused as the book goes on. The more you know your nursery rhymes and fairy tales the funnier it is.

Jack Spratt is in charge of the Nursery Crimes Division of Reading, a division on the verge of losing its budget thanks to his recent inability to convict the Three Little Pigs of murdering the Big Bad Wolf. Then the smashed remains of Humpty Dumpty are found next to a wall and Jack knows it wasn't suicide. Now Jack must find the murderer, save his misfit division, and keep sleuthing celebrity, DCI Friedland Chimes, off the case. I absolutely loved The Big Over Easy. Thank you for the recommendation Polly! Each page is packed with nursery rhyme references but it never feels overwhelming as the passages are so matter-of-fact. It leaves you with this nagging feeling that these events actually happened. Fforde's dry, sarcastic humor kept my snickering and speeding

through the novel. The Jack and the Beanstalk references killed me every time! My only complaint is the climax chapters were too fast paced for me in comparison to the rest of the story. That's it for me but I did take some time to read the few negative reviews of *The Big Over Easy*. My response to them is: do NOT read this book if you don't like murder mysteries. It's a murder mystery that mocks the elaborate and showy nature of modern mystery development. How can you expect to like that when you don't enjoy mystery novels?! Other reviewers complain that Fforde is trying too hard to be clever and only includes all the nursery rhyme information to make his readers feel smart when they get the references. You've got to be kidding me. Yes, the clever jokes and writing style may be too much for some but I highly doubt Fforde is more concerned with boosting the ego of his readers over the need to provide a good complex story. My only advice for such thinkers is that you should get over yourself and learn to enjoy the mechanics and discipline required to write a well balanced story. Fforde's jaw dropping ability to expertly meld so much research and detail in to one murder mystery has me wanting to be a better writer. I recommend *The Big Over Easy* to writers, as well as readers, as a prime example of a writing style that remains showing despite being so informational. Have you discovered the Nursery Crimes Division? It's time you should! Lindsay

This is one of my favorite authors and the Nursery Crime series is by far the best. I say some violence because it is a murder mystery. The victim is Humpty Dumpty. Some violence and some sexual content because of the characters Punch & Judy who, if you look at their history in the world of puppet shows, alternately fight and then have make up sex. It is not described, you are just told that they do it. These books are a masterful way of using all of the old familiar nursery rhyme characters and creating a whole new story with them. Jack Spratt is the detective! So clever.

This book is certainly imaginative. The author uses double entendres and nursery rhyme characters to tell the story of Humpty Dumpty's demise. Funny and as a true murder mystery, keeps you guessing til the end.

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