

★ **Cold Cruel Winter:**

A Richard Nottingham Mystery

Chris Nickson. Severn/Crème de la Crime,
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Set in 1732, Nickson's superb follow-up to 2010's *The Broken Token* finds Richard Nottingham, constable of the city of Leeds, fearful that he will lose more loved ones after his older daughter falls ill and dies. An especially hard winter is making things tough for the entire community. Then a savage murder—that of wool merchant Samuel Graves, whose throat was cut and the skin flayed from his back—tests Nottingham and his men to their utmost. While the motive for the mutilation murder of the respectable Graves isn't obvious, the constable soon learns the grisly reason for the trophy taking. Other victims will follow, he realizes, if he doesn't manage to stop the butcher first. Nickson, who does an excellent job depicting an honest, damaged policeman trying to seek justice at a time when influence trumps truth, may yet join the front rank of historical mystery writers. (Nov.)