

# All Good Things

## *Shetland Series draws to a close*

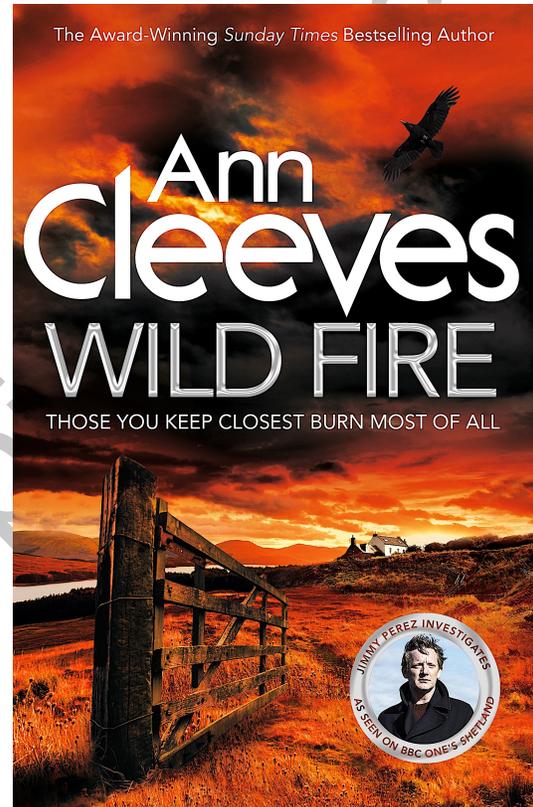
### *Suspended Sentences*

by Jim Napier

When the morning post brings the final novel in a series it is at best a mixed blessing: as readers we've grown accustomed to the characters and their relationships, formed a bond of sorts with the more likeable figures, become engrossed in the evolving story-lines of their lives, and are understandably reluctant to see the last of them. At the same time, knowledgeable readers recognise that any series has a limited shelf life, and authors can grow restive and want to set out in new directions.

*Wild Fire* is the eighth and final novel in Ann Cleeves' highly successful Shetland series. It features Scottish Detective Inspector Jimmy Perez and his team, set against the stark and remote Orkney Islands in the north of Scotland. It is a harsh life for the inhabitants, and the elements that define their daily lives are primal and sometimes cruel.

In *Wild Fire* Jimmy Perez is called to the tiny village of Deltaness.



After receiving several anonymous notes suggesting that a family of incomers are not welcome there, the body of a young woman is found hanging in the family's barn by their autistic son, Christopher. It is the same barn where the previous owner of the property, Dennis Gear, had hung himself, unable to cope with the loss of the

family home that had meant so much to him. It soon becomes evident that the victim, a nanny to the children of a local GP, did not commit suicide.

Before long another person dies, and she won't be the last.

Jimmy Perez, aided by senior officer and occasional lover Willow Reeves, must somehow dig beneath the surface of the islanders' daily lives to uncover long-hidden secrets so private, and so compelling, that someone could be driven to murder because of them. And when he does, the truth that emerges is more disturbing than even he could have imagined.

Ann Cleeves has been entertaining readers in more than thirty novels written over the past three

decades. During that time she has honed her craft to the point where, in 2017, she was awarded the prestigious CWA Diamond Dagger for excellence in crime writing. Cleeves' stories perfectly reveal the atmosphere of their specific settings, and her use of multiple viewpoints to tell her story gives genuine depth to each of her characters. Like her other novels in the series, *Wild Fire* is often dark and more than a little disturbing, as it's meant to be. But it is nonetheless an immensely rewarding read. Cleeves' many fans may lament the fact that the series has drawn to an end; but I would suggest that instead we rejoice at the promise of more, and even better, things to come.

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Reviewed by Jim Napier, April 2018.

Since 2005 more than 500 of Jim Napier's reviews and interviews have appeared in several Canadian newspapers and on such websites as *Spinetingler*, *The Rap Sheet*, *Shots Magazine*, *Crime Time*, *Reviewing The Evidence*, *January* magazine, the *Montreal Review of Books*, the *Ottawa Review of Books*, and his own award-winning review site, *Deadly Diversions*. His reviews can also be found on *Amazon.com* and *Goodreads*. His crime novel *Legacy* was published in the Spring of 2017, and the second in the series, *Ridley's War*, is scheduled for release in late 2018. He can be reached at [jnapier@deadlydiversions.com](mailto:jnapier@deadlydiversions.com)