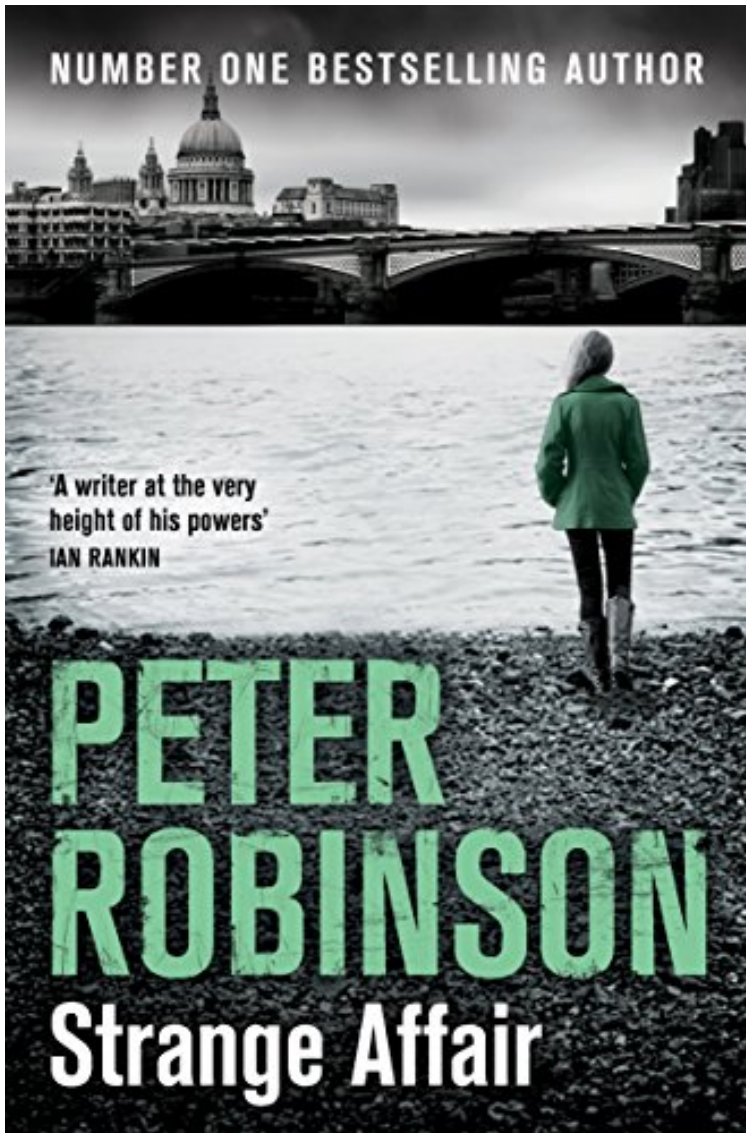


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Strange Affair (The Inspector Banks Series, Book 15)



Par Peter Robinson
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurStrange Affair is the fifteenth novel in Peter Robinson's Inspector Banks series, following on from Playing With Fire. When Alan Banks receives a disturbing message from his brother, Roy, he abandons the peaceful Yorkshire Dales for the bright lights of London, to seek him out. But Roy seems to have vanished into thin air. Meanwhile, DI Annie Cabbot is called to a quiet stretch of road just outside Eastvale, where a young woman has been found dead in her car. In the victims pocket, scribbled on a slip of paper, police discover Banks name and address. Living in Roy's empty South Kensington house, Banks finds himself digging into the life of the brother he never really knew, nor even liked. And as he begins to uncover

a few troubling surprises, the two cases become sinisterly entwined . . . 'The Banks novels are, simply put, the best series now on the market' Stephen King.com Without a doubt, the family and friends of fictional sleuths are two of the most endangered species on the planet. Crime novelists seem to have no qualms about sacrificing the people nearest and dearest to their protagonists, if doing so will advance plot development or bestow emotional depth upon their series stars. Peter Robinson continues this ruthless tradition in *Strange Affair*, his tension-packed 15th novel featuring headstrong British Detective Chief Inspector Alan Banks.

Still on the mend after the blazing finale of 2004's *Playing with Fire*, temporarily sworn off whiskey but back to smoking, Banks is interrupted in the midst of brooding over his life and failed relationships by a message from his estranged younger brother, Roy, who says he needs the DCI's help in "a matter of life and death." Concerned, especially since Roy boasts a history of dubious business dealings, Banks leaves Yorkshire for his sibling's home in London, only to find that residence unlocked, Roy's computer missing, and his cell phone left behind. After learning that Roy was last seen stepping into a car with an unidentified man, and receiving on Roy's mobile what appears to be a photo of his only brother slumped over in a chair, the cop fears that a kidnapping has occurred. Meanwhile, back in Eastvale, Banks's colleague and ex-lover,

Detective Inspector Annie Cabbot, probes the shooting death of Jennifer Clewes, a 27-year-old family planning center administrator from London who's been found in her car, with the address of Banks's once-ruined (and recently broken into) cottage tucked into her jeans pocket. As Annie seeks to identify Clewes's attacker and determine whether this crime fits a pattern of roadway assaults, she's anxious also to discover what connection Banks may have to the case. But the DCI is frustratingly nowhere to be found. Like 2003's *Close to Home*, *Strange Affair* adds some welcome bricks to Banks's back story, this time forcing him to reappraise a brother whom he had long resented and distrusted. Simultaneously, Robinson's latest police procedural delivers artfully contrived, intersecting story lines charged with rumors of international arms dealing, hints of misdeeds at a women's clinic, secondary players so shady they might be invisible after sundown, and insights into just how far Banks's career has distanced him from folks less steeped in the ugly side of mankind. An immensely satisfying mystery, filled with professional risks and personal regrets, this is truly an *Affair* to remember. --J. Kingston Pierce

Extrait Was she being followed? It was hard to tell at that time of night on the motorway. There was plenty of traffic, lorries for the most part, and people driving home from the pub just a little too carefully, red BMWs coasting up the fast lane, doing a hundred or more, businessmen in a hurry to get home from late meetings. She was beyond Newport Pagnell now, and the muggy night air blurred the red tail lights of the cars ahead and the oncoming headlights across the road. She began to feel nervous as she checked her rear-view mirror and saw that the car was still behind her. She pulled over to the outside lane and slowed down. The car, a dark Mondeo, overtook her. It was too dark to glimpse faces, but she thought there was just one person in the front and another in the back. It didn't have a taxi light on top, so she guessed it was probably a private hire-car and stopped worrying. Some rich git being ferried to a nightclub in Leeds, most likely. She overtook the Mondeo a little further up the motorway and didn't give it a second glance. The late-night radio was playing Old Blue Eyes singing *Summer Wind*. Her kind of music, no matter how old-fashioned people told her it was. Talent and good music never went out of style as far as she was concerned. When she got to Watford Gap services, she realized she felt tired and hungry, and she still had a long way to go, so she decided to stop for a short break. She didn't even notice the Mondeo pull in two cars behind her. A few seedy-looking people hung around the entrance; a couple of kids who didn't look old enough to drive stood smoking and playing the machines, giving her the eye as she walked past, staring at her breasts. She went first to the ladies, then to the caf, where she bought a ham and tomato sandwich and sat alone to eat, washing it down with a Diet Coke. At the table opposite, a man with a long face and dandruff on the collar of his dark suit jacket ogled her over the top of his glasses, pretending to read his newspaper and eat a sausage roll. Was he just a common or garden-variety perv, or was there something more sinister in his interest? she wondered. In the end, she decided he was just a perv. Sometimes it seemed as if the world were full of them, that she could hardly walk down the street or go for a drink on her own without some sad pillock who thought he was God's gift eyeing her up, like the kids hanging around the entrance, or coming over and laying a line of chat on her. Still, she told herself, what else could you expect at this time of night in a motorway service station? A couple of other men came in and went to the counter for coffee-to-go, but they didn't give her a second glance. She finished half the sandwich, dumped the rest and got her travel mug filled with coffee. When she walked back to her car she made sure that there were people around a family with two young kids up way past their bedtime, noisy and hyperactive and that no one was following her. The tank was only a quarter full, so she filled it up at the petrol station, using her

credit card right there, at the pump. The perv from the caf pulled up at the pump opposite and stared at her as he put the nozzle in the tank. She ignored him. She could see the night manager in his office, watching through the window, and that made her feel more secure. Tank full, she turned down the slip-road and eased in between two articulated lorries. It was hot in the car, so she opened both windows and enjoyed the play of breeze they created. It helped keep her awake, along with the hot black coffee. The clock on the dashboard read 12:35 a.m. Only about two or three hours to go, then she would be safe. Penny Cartwright was singing Richard Thompsons Strange Affair when Banks walked into the Dog and Gun, her low, husky voice milking the songs stark melancholy for all it was worth. Banks stood by the door, transfixed. Penny Cartwright. He hadnt seen her in over ten years, though he had thought of her often, even seen her name in Mojo and Uncut from time to time. The years had been kind. Her figure still looked good in blue jeans and a tight white T-shirt tucked in at the waist. The long, ravens-wing hair he remembered looked just as glossy as ever in the stage lights, and the few threads of grey here and there made her look even more attractive. She seemed a little more gaunt than before, a little more sad around the eyes, perhaps, but it suited her, and Banks liked the contrast between her pale skin and dark hair. When the song ended, Banks took advantage of the applause to walk over to the bar, order a pint and light a cigarette. He wasnt happy with himself for having started smoking again after six months or more on the wagon, but there it was. He tried to avoid smoking in the flat, and he would stop again as soon as hed got himself back together. For the moment, it was a crutch, an old friend come back to visit during a time of need. There wasnt a seat left in the entire lounge. Banks could feel the sweat prickling on his temples and at the back of his neck. He leaned against the bar and let Pennys voice transport him as she launched into Blackwater Side. She had two accompanists, one on guitar and the other on stand-up bass, and they wove a dense tapestry of sound against which her lyric lines soared. The next round of applause marked the end of the set, and Penny walked through the crowd, which parted like the Red Sea for her, smiling and nodding hello as she went, and stood next to Banks at the bar. She lit a cigarette, inhaled, made a circle of her mouth and blew out a smoke ring towards the optics. From the Hardcover edition.