



The Man in the Crooked Hat

Harry Dolan

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"A new master mystery writer emerges."--*Forbes Magazine*

One cryptic clue leads a desperate man into a labyrinthine puzzle of murder in the electrifying new novel from national bestselling author Harry Dolan.

There's a killer, and he wears a crooked hat.

Private investigator Jack Pellum has spent two years searching for the man who he believes murdered his wife--a man he last saw wearing a peacoat and a fedora. Months of posting fliers and combing through crime records yield no leads. Then a local writer commits suicide, and he leaves a bewildering message that may be the first breadcrumb in a winding trail of unsolved murders . . .

Michael Underhill is a philosophical man preoccupied by what-ifs and could-have-beens, but his life is finally coming together. He has a sweet and beautiful girlfriend, and together they're building their future home. Nothing will go wrong, not if Underhill has anything to say about it. The problem is, Underhill has a dark and secret past, and it's coming back to haunt him.

These two men are inexorably drawn together in a mystery where there is far more than meets the eye, and nothing can be taken for granted. Filled with devious reversals and razor-sharp tension, *The Man in the Crooked Hat* is a masterwork from "one of America's best new crime writers" (*Lansing State Journal*).

The Man in the Crooked Hat Details

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Author : Harry Dolan

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From Reader Review The Man in the Crooked Hat for online ebook

Midwest Geek says

Although most users classify this as a mystery, we readers find out in the first chapter that the killer is Michael Underhill, whose victim in that chapter is the wife of the MC, Jack Pllum. Jack is a former detective who is obsessed with finding out who killed his wife about three years earlier. The only mystery for the reader is WHY he killed her, but do I care? I generally love mysteries but not pure thrillers, and among the genre, I am tired of reading about serial killers. However, this differs from the usual thriller trope, in that it is less of an adventure and action story and more like a police-prodedural investigation. To my surprise, I actually enjoyed this standalone story, which was well-written and suspenseful.

Structurally, this reminds me of Very Bad Men, the other book by this author that I read several years ago. Like that story, this book spans a long time and involves so many characters that it is helpful to write down the names of various people to remind yourself who they were when mentioned later. I wonder whether all his plots proceed in this way. I'll have to wait until I've read The Last Dead Girl, which apparently is a prequel to the David Loogan series.

Patty says

The Man In The Crooked Hat
By
Harry Dolan

What it's all about...

Jack Pllum is a tortured man. His wife has been murdered. He has one goal. That goal is to find the man in the crooked hat...that's the man who murdered his wife. Matters are complicated because Jack is a former policeman. Jack's father is a powerful judge with good intentions for his son. He interferes with Jack's mission. Jack posts flyers, investigates, talks to people...to get what he wants...finding the man with the crooked hat.

Why I wanted to read it...

I wanted to read this book mostly because of the author. I loved The Last Dead Girl...another amazing book written by him.

What made me truly enjoy this book...

Complexity of plot as well as complex damaged characters and skillful edgy writing made this book irresistible. It is a smoothly written book. It's reveal is slow and enticing. Jack is relentless in his pursuit of this murdering man. And yet...as the murdering man reveals bits and pieces of himself...I was caught up in the idea that he had some sliver of good within him. But...did he? Hmmm...

Why you should read it, too...

Readers who love really good mysteries...complex and unputdownable...will love this author's book.

I received an advance reader's copy from the publisher through Edelweiss and Amazon in exchange for my honest review.

Faith says

I don't like serial killer books where the excuse for the murders is that the serial killer is "crazy", so I was relieved to find that this isn't one of those stories. Set in Detroit, Jack Pellum is an ex-cop whose wife Olivia was murdered. The reader, but not Pellum, knows from the first chapter that Olivia's murderer was Michael Underhill. The story is a search for the reason behind that murder. Pellum is now spending most of his time putting up flyers searching for a man in a crooked hat who he suspects is the killer. His suspicions lead him to several other crimes that might be linked to the man in the crooked hat.

There is a pretty high body count in this book, but by the end each killing had been logically explained. Underhill has an interesting back story and I understood perfectly why his first murder was committed. I even agreed with him. Pellum is also an interesting, obsessed character and a good detective. I can see him continuing in other books if the author decides to make this into a series. I had never heard of this author before but, since I liked the writing style and the twisty plotting of this book, I will probably read more by him.

I received a free copy of this book from the publisher.

Allie Bock says

The Man with the Crooked Hat sounded like an excellent read. It's about a detective trying to solve his wife's murder. He thinks it was done by a serial killer. The story follows him as he unravels the clues to confront the murderer. It is a psychological thriller, which is not my usual genre. In all reality, I was left disappointed at the ending.

The writing was hard to get into. The author tended to write in short choppy sentences, and it felt disjointed to me. I had a hard time getting into the story. He wrote from both the detective's perspective and the murderer, which I don't really care for. So I knew who had killed the wife, it was just a matter of figuring it out why she was killed. I just couldn't get into the characters. I felt like Jack Pellum was too whiny, and Micheal Underhill was very odd. I felt unsatisfied by the time the story ended.

This was not my kind of book but maybe you will enjoy it?

Ann says

Meandering tale that takes it's time in the telling. Slowly the clues add up as the story moves along. A big cast of characters/bodies along the way. No who done it here. We know from the beginning "who", we just have to wait to see how and why as the mystery unfolds. Interesting read.

Lisa says

I've read books before by Harry Dolan and enjoyed them - he is a very talented, assured writer. The Man in the Crooked Hat was another well-written addition to his repertoire. An added bonus: the story should appeal to readers who are not strictly mystery fans, as there was more depth and heft to the story than say, a typical thriller or action-based mystery. Another reviewer included that the book was more 'literary' and I'd agree with that.

The only reason I gave the book 3 instead of 4 stars is I'm not overly fond of books that go back and forth between different narratives and characters - although I can understand why the book was laid out in this fashion. I wouldn't let this stop anyone from reading this book however - and to try other books written by Mr. Dolan as well.

I received an ARC of this book in exchange for an honest review - thank you to the publisher and Goodreads for providing me with this opportunity.

Luanne Ollivier says

The Man in the Crooked Hat is the latest book from Harry Dolan. This was a first read of this author for me, but it will certainly not be the last! Dolan's writing is clever, his plotting serpentine and his characters intriguing, making for an addictive read.

Jack Pellum is a former police detective. When his wife is murdered, Jack goes off the rails. The case remains unsolved after two years, but there is a clue that Jack is sure will lead him to the killer. The man wears a crooked hat. A recent murder finally lends credence to Jack's belief. The man with the hat is also sighted at this latest scene.....

Jack is a great character, well fleshed out in both personality and personally. I liked his voice. Dolan gives him snappy dialogue, but also an introspective internal look at grief, loss and love. Jack is juxtaposed with Michael Underhill. Yes, we know the name of the killer and he too has a voice. A frightening one, as he can justify everything he's doing and has done. "This is as much on you as it is on me. I'm not going to feel bad about this." We get to see inside Underhill's personal life as well.

The plotting of The Man in the Crooked Hat does not follow a straightforward path - instead it is, well, crooked. We know who the killer is - or do we? Dolan's plotting is delightfully complex, with minuscule clues that need to be connected. A clever cat and mouse game.

I really enjoyed this decidedly different mystery.

Kathy says

this was only ok for me at times, and other times I was hooked.
I didn't feel a connection with the protagonist.

Carol says

Some parts were really good. But I completely lost interest after awhile and skimmed the last third. (The female characters were cardboard cutouts. Had absolutely no idea why Jack was with Kim.)

Valerie says

Jack Pellum, a former police officer and currently doing private investigative work, has a personal stake in his latest case. His wife was murdered when she was out doing her job, taking photos. When Jack looks into the case, he realizes that the killer is probably connected to a prior murder which took place 20 years before. The most noticeable thing about this killer is that he often wears a either a ball cap or a fedora, which is crooked. As Jack keeps going over law enforcement files, he finds that several young teenage boys had disappeared around the same time that the 20 year old murder occurred. However, much to everyone's surprise, they are not connected. Since Jack's father is a well respected judge, he is able to access the police reports and files on all the incidents. Deep into his investigation, he realizes that the man with the crooked hat has murdered other people in addition to his wife. All he has to do his try and fit the pieces of this strange puzzle together. And it is definitely a strange set of events that connects all the murders related to the man in the crooked hat. This book has a very convoluted plot and I thought it was a great story. The characters in the story are very well depicted by the author, down to each one's philosophy of life. The book is quite different from the other Dolan books, the David Loogan series.

Darlene says

Quite a strange, quirky book. This is the first book I have read by this author. My rating was a three, but in the end I raised it to a four, simply because it kept my interest. You know from page one who the murderer is, but you don't find out the why's until late in the book.
I may try another book from this author in the future.

debra says

Fast-paced, intricate plotting, interesting characters, many twists and turns. For me, the only detractions were a few too many serendipitous occurrences and twists near the end.

Scottsdale Public Library says

Detective Jack Pellum's wife, Olivia, was murdered as she took photos by a lake, and every day since then he has been doggedly following one possible clue: a man in a crooked hat he had glimpsed days before her death. Jack leaves the police force and working as a private investigator peppers the streets with flyers of a crude drawing of a man in a crooked hat. As fate would have it, a suicide leads him to the first of a handful of unsolved murders. Was his wife's murder random as it appears these were? Or are they all connected to the man in the crooked hat, making Jack's search more than what many think is a desperate man's hopeless obsession.

The story works its way backwards, alternating between Jack's investigation, the murders, and the killer's rationale, if you can call it that for the murders. As the storyline comes full circle and the pieces of the puzzle fall into place, the killer makes one final threat that aims too close to home. Throw in a few unexpected twists and turns and you are in for one well executed mystery thriller that will have you peaking around corners for the man in the crooked hat. – Amy O.

Jessica Woodbury says

Dolan's last book really knocked it out of the park so I had high expectations for this one, but I found this one to be just your average competent mystery. Relies too heavily on the tropes I like to see subverted (man obsessed with wife's death, man whose every hunch is always correct, etc.) and the plot itself didn't do anything particularly novel.

Gloria Feit says

From the publisher: Jack Pellum is a Detroit detective who left the force after his wife was murdered in a random attack. But Jack never bought that theory, and the case was never solved. Eighteen months later, Jack is working as a part-time private investigator while continuing the hunt for an elusive person of interest in his wife's murder: a man in a fedora who Jack is convinced could break open the case. When a local writer's cryptic suicide note suggests the man in the fedora actually exists, Jack picks up the thread he's certain will lead him to his wife's killer. He never imagined it would also unravel twenty years of secrets and unsolved crimes or make him the target of a psychopath trying to erase his own past.

In the early pages of the book, Jack meets Paul Rook, 26 years old, whose mother was killed nine years earlier, and who shares a similar obsession, trying to find a man in a fedora who he thinks killed his mother. When Jack asks him what he thinks the man's motives are, the reply he receives is "He kills people. He doesn't have motives." He tells Paul that he has been doing his own sleuthing, and that he's "found sightings of him. Some of them go back years. The earliest one I've found was twenty years ago. It happened about thirty miles from here, in a town called Belleville. I think the man in the hat got his start there" . . . Paul had told him about more than a dozen murders - - each one with a witness who claimed to have seen a man in a hat. The sightings took place at different times, sometimes on the day of the murder, sometimes in the days before. Never at the scene of the crime." Jack then is told about another boy who was killed, about a month later, in a town six or seven miles from the scene of that murder.

Jack is relentless in his search, and at times I must admit it became a bit too much of a slog for this reader. But the tension and the suspense mount, and almost before one realizes it one is caught up in the investigation almost as much as its protagonist. In the very first pages of the book we meet Michael

Underhill. It is over 70 pages later before we meet him again. But surprisingly, that doesn't lessen the suspense. Even when we learn "who," the "how" and "why" are absorbing, and the resolution is very satisfying. The novel is highly recommended.
