



Very Bad Men

Harry Dolan

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A new book in the nationally bestselling series that has wowed critics and readers alike.

David Loogan returns! Loogan is living in Ann Arbor with Detective Elizabeth Waishkey and her daughter, Sarah. He's settled into a quiet routine as editor of the mystery magazine *Gray Streets* -- until one day he finds a manuscript outside his door. It begins: "*I killed Henry Kormoran.*"

Anthony Lark has drawn up a list of names -- Terry Dawtrey, Sutton Bell, Henry Kormoran. To his eyes, the names glow red on the page. They move. They *breathe*. The three men on the list have little in common except that seventeen years ago they were involved in a notorious robbery. And now Anthony Lark is hunting them down, and he won't stop until every one of them is dead.

Very Bad Men Details

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Author : Harry Dolan

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From Reader Review Very Bad Men for online ebook

Mizuki says

It is a decent second novel, but I don't like it as its prequel *Bad Things Happen*, the opening is very strong (the murderer is so very damn clever and creative), the developments of the murderer's POV and the schemes about the politician's family are good too. The ending isn't bad either, but it is a weak comparing with the breathtaking opening.

Gloria Feit says

This new novel from the author of the acclaimed “Bad Things Happen,” his writing debut, has no ‘sophomore book’ problems. “Very Bad Men” immediately engages the reader, and one is quickly drawn into this compelling tale of murder, specifically, the murder of two men who were part of a bank robbery seventeen years ago, and the attempted murder of a third. All three men had been convicted, and served jail time of varying lengths. But what could be the motive? These three men had not seen nor contacted one another in all the intervening years. And the killer – for his identity is quickly revealed – is not a cool, professional hit man; that is immediately made clear.

David Loogan, the editor-in-chief of a mystery magazine, receives, in a plain, unmarked envelope, what at first glance appears to be a manuscript, only several pages long, bearing no signature, the first line of which reads “I killed Henry Kormoran . . .” Loogan, who lives with his ‘significant other,’ Elizabeth Waishkey, an Ann Arbor, Michigan, detective, and her precocious 16-year-old daughter, ultimately begins a kind of parallel and unofficial investigation.

Each character in the novel is wonderfully well-drawn. These include the killer, who suffers from synesthesia, a rare affliction which results in a confusion of the senses, with words taking on dimensions far beyond their ‘normal’ printed appearance, according to his emotional reaction to them; Lucy Navarro, a young and rather endearing reporter, who comes up with a bizarre theory of the motive for the crimes; assorted politicians and their ‘handlers, among others. The writer invokes some wildly disparate images: Occam and his razor, Aristotle, jazz musician Charlie Parker; mystery authors Dennis Lehane and Michael Connelly; and a theme: “We all want to be known. To be seen for who we really are.” There are carefully placed, and easily missed clues, and startling and unexpected twists in this engrossing novel, which is highly recommended.

Mary says

Harry Dolan had me from the beginning of the book. It starts with David Loogan's memory which sets the tone with terrific ambience - I could feel what kind of character Loogan was going to be from that first moment. I hadn't read Dolan's other book about Loogan but I didn't need to as this story gave me just enough to detail to help me feel comfortable with the original characters.

Loogan is the editor for Gray Streets a mystery magazine where he receives a very interesting notebook -

more of a manuscript - that starts with "I killed Harry Korman in his apartment on Linden Street" at the very moment Loogan's partner, Elizabeth Waishkey, a police detective finds Harry Korman, indeed dead in his apartment. From there the story goes from one fast-paced clue/red herring to another. On the way Dolan introduces us to some terrific characters, including Sarah, Elizabeth's precocious teenage daughter, a senator, and a beguiling lady reporter and are just a few of the well-developed characters. The end left me breathless after such a roller coaster ride. At first I was dissatisfied with the ending but then I realized that Dolan did a beautiful job tying the end back to the beginning and I was satisfied.

Margaret says

I attended an author reading when Mr. Dolan's first book, "Bad Things Happen," was published and found the contrast between the author - to this roomful of strangers: quiet, reserved, read from the book, that was it, no questions, nothing, looked pained in front of an audience, a total cipher - and the fabulous, complex book he'd written to be striking. Happily, none of that complexity has been blown entirely on the first book - this second title, "Very Bad Men," is really complex, maybe a wee bit over much (but only a teensy bit), with all kinds of unexpected plot twists and turns, all set in the fabulous Ann Arbor, Michigan locale. Mr. Dolan's brain is a wondrous thing! And he writes really well, too - just enough noir to keep things fun, but not over the top.

The book takes place during a hot Michigan summer (the really hot bit that straddles July to August), and as in "Bad Things Happen" Mr. Dolan sticks to geography and local color authenticity - really fun for Ann Arborites and Michigan alums who miss the joint.

Jim says

Not quite a 4 star read, but darn close & anyone who looks over my ratings will see that I usually rate this sort of book with only 3 stars. Dolan has a really twisty mind, though. Motivations are not what they seem & everyone has secrets that slowly come together into a wonderful ending. I'm very impressed by how well Dolan managed all the bits & pieces. Every time I wondered how the mystery could get deeper, Dolan did it in such an unexpected, perfect way that I almost chortled with delight.

The first book was better simply because the hero was also part of the mystery. While this book stands well enough alone, I don't think David Loogan was all that well drawn, so don't start with this book. You must read the first else he's a rather lackluster hero. He's an every-man with an over developed sense of justice & curiosity that doesn't seem quite 'real' without the history of the first book.

The point of view changed a bit too frequently. It may have really bothered me if I was reading for extended periods of time. As it was, my reading was choppy, 30 minutes here & there, so I could roll with it pretty easily.

There is a third book & I'd be interested if it was reasonably priced. \$11 for the Kindle edition is too steep, though. If it was \$5 or under, I'd snatch it up, even though I don't really want to read another right now.

Diane says

I always know I will enjoy a book from the Amy Einhorn Books imprint of Putnam Books. Most of the ones I have read are by female authors- Kathryn Stockett's *The Help*, Sarah Blake's *The Postmistress*, Eleanor Brown's *The Weird Sisters*, and Liane Moriarty's *What Alice Forgot*. All of these books have strong female protagonists, which is part of the appeal for me.

The latest book from the imprint has a male protagonist- Harry Dolan's *Very Bad Men*. It is the second novel in the series featuring David Loogan, an editor for a mystery magazine who lives with Elizabeth, a detective, and her teenage daughter Sarah, in Michigan.

Loogan gets drawn into the case of Anthony Lark, a man who has murdered two men and is on his way to murdering another. All of the dead men were involved 17 years ago with a bank robbery that went bad, leaving a robber and a cop dead, and another cop paralyzed from the waist down.

The story is told mainly from the points of view of Loogan and Lark. Both men are interesting characters, and seeing the story from each of their perspectives makes this a much stronger book.

Senate candidate Callie Spencer, whose father is the paralyzed cop, is involved in the murders. But is she a target, a participant in the murders, or is Lark trying to protect her? Lucy Navarro, a reporter for a tabloid newspaper, is snooping around, and Loogan becomes her protector of sorts. When she gets too close to the truth and disappears, Loogan gets angry.

Dolan takes care to create fully realized characters. I particularly enjoyed his portraits of the teenagers; Elizabeth's daughter Sarah, and Nick, the teenage son and brother of two of Lark's targets, were really on the money for me.

The mystery of why Lark is killing these men is complicated and the reason really comes out of left field. I have to say I had absolutely no idea where it would end up, but it was a crazy trip getting there. If the author left clues as to what motivated Lark to kill, I did not pick them up. I found it satisfying that I really did not know where he was going until the end.

This novel is crackling good literary crime fiction; it put me in mind of Sara Paretsky's novels. I'm going to seek out the first novel in the series and anxiously await the third one.

Midwest Geek says

I listened to this more than six years ago, and, somewhat to my surprise, I really enjoyed it. I say that because, although has been overwhelmingly classified as a mystery, its structure is more like a thriller. We know from the beginning that Anthony Lark is the killer, and that David Loogan, an editor and sometime writer, is the "detective." In fact, Elizabeth, with whom he lives along with her teenage daughter, is a police detective. The motivation for Lark is the mystery, and figuring out why is a route to finding him.

At this late date, I'll keep this short. My sentiments have already been stated by several other reviewers; the review by Sandy expresses them at least as well as I could. The bonus for me is that the action takes place in

and around Ann Arbor, where I lived for many years, and is also the home of the author. I'll read more of Dolan.

Randy says

A complex plot in this new thriller from Harry Dolan, the second to feature mystery magazine editor David Loogan and his live-in girl friend, Detective Elizabeth Waishkey.

We know the killer right off. Anthony Lark and it's tied into a seventeen year old bank robbery attempt. Five men, one killed, the driver escaped, never to be heard from, and the other three captured, but not before one of them shot a Sheriff that wandered into the bank right in the middle of things, leaving him in a wheelchair. The shooter got thirty years, the other two lesser sentences and had lived clean lives since then.

Lark leaves a manuscript at Loogan's office laying out his aim to kill them all.

While all this is going on, we learn that the daughter of the paraplegic ex-sheriff is running for the Senate, her father-in-law is retiring, and there's a young reporter stirring things up about the old robbery and the connection with the would-be politician.

Plot twists keep coming in this one, keeping me off balance all the way through as I kept trying to figure where the author was taking the story.

Liked this one.

Roberta says

There is kind of a leap from *Bad Things Happen* to this book since David is now living with Elizabeth and her daughter, Sarah. David is the editor of *Grey Streets* magazine, the job that he accepted near the end of the first book. Considering how little time he spends in the office, one wonders when the next issue will be published.

There is an intricate plot with a large cast of characters. What I was told about this book before reading it was that it was like an episode of "Columbo" because we know the bad guy at the beginning of the book and we watch the detective pursue him. But that information was incorrect; we know who the killer is at the beginning of the book but not who the bad guys are. The sheriff snaps the cuffs on the killer with 210 pages left in the book.

The book is not without flaws - several reviewers have gone into detail, but there was plenty here for me to like. I like the killer, a color-graphemic synesthete. I like David, the mystery magazine editor that fantasies are made of. Elizabeth is OK as the girlfriend (Very much like David Rosenfelt's character, Laurie, and oh so much better than Robert B. Parker's Suze) and her daughter, Sarah, is very personable as is Nick, the other teenager in the book. Since it's too late to read the prequel *The Last Dead Girl* in chronological order, I'm saving it for later and looking forward to reading *The Man in the Crooked Hat* next.

Barbara says

Harry Dolan is one of those authors who, when I finish a book, I immediately start looking for the next one. It's easier if you discover those authors after they've written a dozen books or so, otherwise the wait is agonizing!

Sharon says

David Loogan is back, and the bad guys better beware.

Just like in the highly enjoyable first book, readers can expect lots of twists and layers, intriguing characters, and even more from intrepid police detective Elizabeth and her precocious daughter Sarah. Of course, the main appeal is the protagonist. Harry Dolan has created a winning main character in Loogan, a mystery magazine editor and reluctant gumshoe who is reminiscent of the creations of Robert B. Parker or even Chandler and Hammett.

This series is a must for mystery lovers.

Bibliophile says

The author clearly has a thing for hair. In the first book I lost count of all the raven locks and chestnut tresses that spilled over the pages. Unfortunately, the hair porn persists in book number two. Not only are the raven locks still around, now people's pants are being compared to raven hair. As in: "her slacks were the color of her raven hair". So, black slacks. Gotcha. It's a minor detail, I know, but I can't seem to get over it. What compels a man to obsess about women's hair so much? I want to know! Ok, the hair isn't the only thing I minded. The narrative shifting between first and third person was jarring. I guess I should be grateful that the hair didn't get its own voice. Nevertheless, it's a suspenseful, perfectly entertaining crime novel if you can overlook these things.

Rachelle Urist says

The setting is Ann Arbor, where I live, but somehow there was no thrill in seeing familiar landmarks spelled out on the page. Maybe that's because the book just never grabbed me. I realized about 2/3 of the way through that the missing element was a clear motivation for the protagonist to act like a detective. He's a magazine editor, not a professional sleuth. His domestic partner is the detective. So why is he compelled to hunt the killer? He's certainly not authorized to do some of what he does. Were his history made clear (apparently it's made clear in the precursor to this book, which I didn't read), then I'd have happily hopped on for the ride. Most books with sequels reiterate the core elements in each book, so that the reader is not obliged to have plowed through the early ones to appreciate the later ones. Each should stand on its own. Having said all this, it's clear this writer has talent for writing cliffhangers. Each chapter ends (conscientiously) dripping mystery. But it's a talent that struck me as superficial - similar to using a play-script format to set words on a page and then calling oneself a playwright.

Once I realized why I couldn't cotton to the story, I couldn't keep reading. I read about 350 pages, with about 40 left to go, but I just couldn't pick the book up again.

Diane S ? says

3 1/2 - An ARC won through Librarything and a thrilling story with strong characters. Logan, editor of Grey Streets, is at times amusing and at times brash, his girlfriend, she of the glass beads, is a detective who is called to investigate a dead body at the same time Logan receives a manuscript detailing the murder. A lot of suspense, twists and turns as they try to figure out the perpetrator of the crimes. Good read for all suspense afficiendos.

Ann Collette says

I didn't like this book at all. I missed the first one in the series so that may have something to do with why I found the protagonist so lackluster and underdeveloped. The awkwardly named David Loogan edits a small mystery magazine (a job that would pay next to nothing and since he barely finishes editing one story in the course of the book I kept wondering how the hell he supported himself). One day he finds a ms. outside the door to his office, where the writer takes responsibility for the murder of a local man, and details his plans to kill a few others. Believing it to be true, David and his detective girlfriend go off in search of the truth behind the mystery manuscript. Many, many characters are introduced, few of which register with enough singularity so that you remember them. I kept asking myself, who's this guy again? Which character is he? An overload of twists and turns never seemed organic to the book but more of a device to show off how clever the author is. And he is, but his awkward POV changes and drawn out exposition gradually made me disengage emotionally from the book. I didn't believe a word of it. It's not that I don't recognize the author's talent -- but more that his windbag style made me lose all patience with his book. It's a matter of taste, that's all.
