



Jack in the Box

Hania Allen , Hania Allen

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In an explosive crime debut featuring Detective Yvonne "Von" Valenti, members of a hit show in London's West End start dying under mysterious circumstances—much like an unsolved case from 30 years before

Who killed director Max Quincey during a run of the play *Jack-in-the-Box* in London's West End? Who killed the male prostitutes back in 1985, when the show was last performed and when Max was the star? What is the significance of the Jack-in-the-Box doll found with the body, the markings on its eyes matching mutilations to Max's face, and identical to the toys found with each of the original victims? Has the killer returned? Is it a copycat? Or a revenge slaying for the rent boy murders when Max was prime suspect? The questions are stacking up for DCI Yvonne "Von" Valenti, and her partner, DI Steve English, as she races against the clock to unravel a tangled web of clues, lies and halftruths, to catch a deranged killer before they strike again. Von investigates both cases simultaneously as she battles with a wall of silence and increasingly fractured relationships with the Chief Super, her journalist boyfriend, and her errant teenage daughter.

Jack in the Box Details

Date : Published April 21st 2014 by Freight Books (first published November 27th 2012)

ISBN : 9781908754479

Author : Hania Allen , Hania Allen

Format : Paperback 276 pages

Genre : Mystery, Crime, Fiction

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Miki101.michaela says

Jack in the Box - a Whodunnit with ..., 17. Juli 2013

... unexpected twists and turns, but also with a lot of lengths.

I liked the other book written by Hanna Allen ICEHOTEL very much.

Then I started to read "Jack in the Box", but everything was quite different. The idea of the double crime plot was really brilliant, but the authoress this time had a bit too much pots on the fire. So, after the half of the thriller, my interest started to fade away a bit.

There were the 3 1/2 killings 15 years ago - never resolved. Now the new killing and it's the Super's brother who left this world in the same way the earlier victims did. Then enters the play, after that the drugs and... and...

And out heroine Von Valenti seems to be more the designated scapegoat than a real investigator, who has the full support of her superiors and collaborators.

The more the crime story goes on, more faults are made - mostly by Von. At a certain point I wanted to cry at her: "Hey, stupid girl, think about what You have learnt in the Police Academy!"

No - this crime novel is entertaining until a certain point, not very long over the half. After that I only wanted to see the culprits - yet guessed who they were, and how they were implicated - arrested, or shot (not to death ...) or fleeing the British Isles before hunted down...

I am sorry - surely the tastes are different. But this "thriller" cannot compete with "Icehotel". It is too long and - as I said before - there are really too many threads to be united well at the end.

But Hanna Allen will surely surprise her readers with a new, exciting crime story or thriller.

And I will read the next one, too.

Jane Walker says

This is crime fiction written to a formula, without inspiration. There's an over-complicated plot; detectives with messy private lives; plenty of sex; and corrupt cops. Nothing comes as a surprise.

Allen can probably do better than this.

LLona Cunningham says

Well crafted police procedural with believable characters and interaction. Doesn't play as well in text-to-speech because it's sometimes difficult to discern which character is speaking (and who's POV is active), but works very well when reading pages normally. It's a good murder mystery with subplots that blend well.

Sheila says

Thought it was a great book. English author, so I did have a little trouble with the style.

Pete Loveday says

This is a cracker of a book and the story is well crafted with many surprising twists and turns. As police procedurals go this is amongst the best and the characters are strong and cleverly developed.

The lead character, Von Valenti, is a strong and forceful woman handling a vicious murder which has trails leading back to a series of murders many years before. Meanwhile her personal life is under stress and her boss, Superintendent Richard Quincey is adding to her worries.

The story is carried forward at all times and is fast paced and full of intrigue.

Highly recommended.

Quanita says

I received this book from 'Good Reads'. In 1985 four teenage boys are brutalized, three die. In 2000 an older man is murdered in the same fashion - strangled with his eyes poked out. A jack-in-the-box is left at each scene. This story has everything - drugs, prostitution, corrupt police and an honest policewoman that won't give up. No one is who they seem and the ending is truly a surprise. This 'Good Read' is a 'Great Read'.

Chip says

More like a 4.5 out of 5. I thoroughly enjoyed this.

Doreen says

I was at Bloody Scotland book festival at Stirling this year. One of the events i attended was "The next big name in crime fiction" . The talk was fascinating and Hania Allen was one of the authors. I bought the book at the event, started it that night and i couldn't put it down. The subject matter is not for the faint hearted, a nice twist to finish with. Can't wait for the next book.

Sandra says

A curate's egg of a book. Absolutely terrific story, well-plotted, excellent twists (except for the very final one!!) and with loads of tension and pace, but, for me, undermined by the characterisation, particularly the dialogue which used such mis-matching vocabulary as to render Von in particular, very hazy. Additionally, something I am more conscious of as a result of hearing my younger son go on about it at length, the intrusion of relationships was over done.

But it is a first novel, and Hania Allen is to be congratulated on it.

Mark says

This was well written and a gripping read.

Karla Wieting says

Excellent reading if you enjoy British Crime. Easy reading with a solid plot. A few twists and turns during the novel and an excellent one to finish off the book. Really enjoyed this novel and will be looking for more from this author.

Alan says

I was thrilled to have won this book in the Goodreads Giveaway. This was certainly a book that once I started, I couldn't put down. Lots of twists and very fast paced. I shall be looking for more books by this author. Recommended.

Andy Harris says

thanks to goodreads for the preview copy

great book, well planned & controlled pace that keeps you interested all the way, i'd imagine the police elements are well researched

strong whodunnit & look forward to mor from this author

Lee Holz says

Jack in the Box is a first rate British police procedural with lots of action, surprises and complications, all expertly handled. The characters are believable and interesting. Highly recommended.

Amy says

A great British murder mystery! I love these types of mystery especially when they include a bit of humor. In this book, Von, a woman detective, must figure out if and how a current murder is linked to a string of murders 25 years ago.

The plot has plenty of twists and turns to keep you guessing. I am hoping there will be more in this series.

