

Holding Patterns

James Chesterton

James Huk (Jan 1, 2022)

Softcover \$14.99 (306pp)

978-0-578-34373-0

The explosive novel Holding Patterns follows a strategic investment banker as he attempts to escape his past.

In James Chesterton's literary thriller *Holding Patterns*, an investment banker who's been accused of embezzlement confronts his past and plans for an uncertain future.

In 2016, Julian is an operations manager at a prestigious global investment firm. His day is ruined when Frank, an agent with the SEC, notifies him that he's under suspicion of embezzling over six million dollars. Julian denies the allegations, but agrees to work with Frank to clear his name. If he's found guilty, he could lose his job, the ability to work in finance, and his family.

When the investigation begins in earnest, Julian is put on paid leave. He is unable to communicate with his coworkers. But instead of spending the time with his wife and children, he decides to take his friend, Gary, to South Carolina for a distraction. They get up to old tricks: steak dinners, golf, drinking, and strippers.

Julian's past includes shocking secrets, and Gary's own shady dealings are an additional complication. The investigation takes a back seat as Gary's indiscretions come to light, leading to a harrowing confrontation between the friends: if Julian continues to associate with Gary, his children's godfather and his oldest friend, his decency may be irrevocably compromised.

The book's complicated financial elements are explained via concise asides. Also explored is the minutiae of flying a private plane: piloting protocol, radio talk, and negotiating with brokers for hangar space. Such details seem extraneous at first, though they come to reveal much about Julian's personality; they also foreshadow intriguing plot twists. More immediately engaging are the book's conversations, which are often filled with snappy comebacks, particularly between Julian and his adversaries in any given scene. Julian's conversations with his daughter are more tender and careful.

Consistent in its shifts between Julian's vacation and Frank's investigation, this concise narrative holds interest. Frank races to expose Julian; Julian's family reels from his potential crime; a suspicious brother-in-law tries to move against him. The result is an intense family drama—though one driven most in its later portions by the disparities between Gary and Julian, more so than by the investigation that began it.

Boasting an explosive conclusion, the novel *Holding Patterns* follows a strategic investment banker as he attempts to escape his past and discovers what matters most.

JOHN M. MURRAY (November 8, 2021)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book and paid a small fee to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. Foreword Reviews and Clarion Reviews make no guarantee that the publisher will receive a positive review. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.