

Key Man

Allen K. Huffstutter

AmazonKDP

Softcover \$14.95 (375pp)

978-1-73690-041-3

A woman in mourning pairs with two detectives to investigate a series of grisly deaths in the involving mystery novel Key Man.

In Allen K. Huffstutter's mystery novel *Key Man*, financial gains and entrepreneurship prove perilous to people's well-being.

One morning in LA, Henry strolls out to his car, turns its key, and triggers a bomb. His murder draws the attention of detectives Siemen and Johnson, who are stumped by the case, which has no immediate clear motive. But Katherine, whose grandfather also died under mysterious circumstances, believes Henry's case is connected to her family's. More murders ensue; it seems that the nation's top entrepreneurs, all at the peak of their financial promise, are being targeted.

Soon, Katherine and the detectives are working together to solve the murders. They interview the bereaved, but without much success. A fortuitous encounter with a financial sector worker who suggests following the money redirects their inquiries toward those who might have gained from the deaths, setting them on the path to solving the case.

Business operations and stock deals are at the center of this mystery's drama. Beside these mechanics, the central characterizations fade: the members of the investigating trio are defined by their roles and work, and are not fleshed out much beyond these factors. Katherine is a prototypical rich woman, used to getting what she wants; Siemen and Johnson are upstanding, loyal to the force, and careful to make sure that their work is reinforced. More intriguing are those whose deaths they investigate, who are subject to violent explosions and schemes to make money off of tragedies. Within the secondary cast, one man hears voices; another is a serial pyromaniac; and still another is a brainy call-girl with a complicated past.

Indeed, the textured tales of the supporting cast hold interest. They are layered into each chapter; some even push the trio's investigation forward. But as the central detectives struggle to understand complex financial matters related to tax filings and Wall Street, the question of who is the most important among this secondary cast is obscured. And while the threads that detectives follow point in a single, clear direction, they also lead to an unexpected disappointment. The solution to the case remains a question mark, despite hints at a larger conspiracy.

A woman in mourning pairs with two detectives to investigate grisly deaths in the mystery novel *Key Man*, which involves high finance, greed, and murder.

JEREMIAH ROOD (March 18, 2022)

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.