

Paper Chase

Hugh Alexander

AuthorHouseUK (Jul 4, 2023)

Hardcover \$29.94 (224pp)

979-882308330-0

An auditor investigates suspicious records at a company to which she has a personal connection in the crime novel Paper Chase.

In Hugh Alexander's intriguing thriller *Paper Chase*, an auditor seeks to make sense of missing and tangled links in a company's accounts.

The novel wields flashbacks in recounting a period in Jennifer, an auditor's, life. She exposed the fraud that occurred at Morgan Field, the well-known financial services company where she worked for years—and where she was romantically involved with Cameron Field, the managing director of the general insurance division. She was unsettled when the records she was given did not add up; the situation became more complicated the further she dug into them. Wanting to be transparent and remain uncompromised, she sought help from various sources, revealing new unsavory details and battling with what to include in her report to the board. Furthermore, the investigation occurred behind Cameron's back.

A substantial number of characters are introduced as the story progresses, with most appearing briefly and having a limited effect on the story's progression. This deluge of names and personas is distracting. Furthermore, the narration moves between uncovering the fraud that occurred at Morgan Field and Jennifer's mountaineering escapades with friends and strangers alike, distracting from the main plot. It becomes circuitous as it meanders through such discursive scenes, unnecessarily lengthening the time that's required for Jennifer to conclude her audit and present her findings. Still, in time, the culprits are exposed and the loose ends are tied up.

More involving is the book's scene setting: Jennifer is from Edinburgh, which she describes with much affection and insight. She extends the same descriptive flair to her explorations of London, Glasgow, and France, observing changing weather, substantial mountain ranges like the Aiguilles Rouges, and the bustle of tourists around attractions like the Mer de Glace and Chamonix. And she is a reflective heroine, often taking the time to plan and interrogate her motivations. Her interactions with other employees at Morgan Field are casual and effectual; she does a convincing job of probing them for the information that could help her make sense of the discrepancies in the company's records. Thus, it strains credulity when Jennifer entertains a paranoid belief that the police are after her, trailing her even to France, causing her to behave erratically.

A cautionary tale about unsavory economic practices, the crime novel *Paper Chase* homes in on the dangers of lending money, including human greed and dishonesty.

GABRIELLA HARRISON (January 30, 2024)

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.