



The Kafka Society

Ron Felber

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THE KAFKA SOCIETY by Ron Felber finds Jack Madson, (A MAN OF INDETERMINATE VALUE), on another adventure. After a night of clubbing, Jack has no memory of how stripper, Amber Starr got into his bed. Great sex doesn't make up for the discovery of a severed head in the trunk of his Mustang convertible. Is Madson a murderer? Before that question can be answered he finds himself helping old high school nemesis, Tom Dougherty, FBI's head of East Coast Operations, to get disentangled from a blackmail scam set up by porn queen Havana Spice. Reluctantly, Madson agrees and it's through Havana that the mask is lifted from Dougherty to expose him as head of a criminal organization that specializes in the most monstrous of enterprises: global human trafficking, run from the underground tunnels beneath New York City, directed by a coterie of intellectual thugs known as the Kafka Society. Once again, the reader follows Madson through a wealth of evil and exotic pleasures before the exciting conclusion of this thrilling page turner."

The Kafka Society Details

Date : Published May 7th 2014 by Barricade Books (first published March 7th 2014)

ISBN : 9781569805107

Author : Ron Felber

Format : Paperback 272 pages

Genre : Thriller, Mystery, Crime, Fiction

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From Reader Review The Kafka Society for online ebook

Benjamin Thomas says

The second Jake Madson novel picks up a few months after the first book (A Man of Indeterminate Value) ended with Jake having to carve out a life based on the circumstances that he brought about in the first book. To do that he decides to become a private investigator. It isn't long before he becomes his own first customer after finding a decapitated head in his trunk. It's a great hook to get the story started.

The plot unfolds in a similar fashion as the first book. It starts in the present with Jake arrested and accused of first degree murder and terrorism but the bulk of the novel is Jake telling the story of how he got to where he is now through a first person "deposition".

The writing is very good but I think there is a fundamental flaw in the book. Jake even states it himself right near the beginning when he admits to the shooting as well as blowing up a federal building. Since I've read the first book I know Jake is most certainly the type to get himself in all kinds of trouble, and pretty much is always in the wrong place at the wrong time. But I also know he isn't the sort of person who would kill an innocent in cold blood or conspire against the US Government as he is accused of here...so I already know the identity of the bad guy and I know when I meet him over and over again during the flashback story that his nice guy persona is all a sham. Other thriller novels have certainly executed this technique brilliantly but for some reason it kept jerking me out of the flow of the story.

One more to go in the trilogy (unless it turns out to be a longer series) and I will tackle that one soonish.

Lynda says

Jack Madson was a restless man always looking for an adventure, never content to stay in one career for long. A former boxer, ex-cop, ex-Wall Street executive and presently an unlicensed private investigator, the only thing constant in Jack's life was his vices - heavy drinking and drugs. Accused of murder, held in prison facing the famous celebrity lawyer Jimmy Bryant, Jack told his story beginning with waking up with his mind blank of any memories during a twenty-four hour time span and the discovery of a severed head in his car. Jack's troubles began when he accepted a job to help his old college friend Tom Dougherty, never expecting his pursuits would lead him to Homeland Security, the slimy underground world of New York City and a Kafkaesque-like secret society. Evil was closing in on Jack, coming from unexpected places at every turn.

"The Kafka Society" was written with average length chapters on crisp white pages. Interesting descriptive phrasing, fast pace and memorable characters maintained the grip this story had on me. There were the usual characterizations expected in most crime fiction stories however these characters were enhanced with an even grittier, perverted persona. The story was very contemporary and believable with the inclusion of GHB, strife among government agencies, widespread corruption and the ability of a secret society to garner powerful people within its fold. It was a remarkable book reinforcing the concept people only see what they want to see and never really look below the surface to see the true essence of what is in front of their eyes.

This review was based on the ARC of "The Kafka Society" received free from Goodreads First Reads.

Trevor Pearson says

<https://bindblottyandcajole.com/2016/...>

Daryl says

A Goodreads First Reads giveaway. I've discovered some new writers and read some great books through this program. This was not one of them. Having not read the first Jack Madson novel, I can at least say that this novel stands on its own. There are some references to the past (and I'm assuming to things that happened in the previous novel) but nothing that distracts the reader who hasn't read the other book. Which is a good thing 'cause there are plenty of other distractions here. My copy is an ARC, but it doesn't say it's an uncorrected proof. For Mr. Felber's sake, I hope that it is. This book is in desperate need of an editor. A few examples: early on, he uses the word "laying" when he means "lying." Now that's something I see often enough, but don't expect it in a professionally published novel. A few pages later, the word "past" is used instead of "passed"; annoying enough, but toward the end of the book, "passed" is used in place of "past." Arrgh. At one point, the main character googles someone and finds 3042 entries. On the very next page, he googles someone else, finds 3057 entries, saying it's eight more than the previous. Serious math problems? Toward the end of the novel, the protagonist heads to room 260 of a particular building, but when he arrives there (again, on the very next page), it's room 206. Then he mentions a "rubric's cube." I could go on, but these examples certainly make the point. Will these issues be fixed in the final printed edition? I hope so; if not, find an editor or a competent proofreader. I have to wonder as Mr. Felber also seems in love with the use of italics, usually for no real reason. Sometimes, just a place name (or the name of a restaurant, for example) is placed in italics. As the book progresses, more and more italics are used. Exclamation points also pop up far more often than they should. Sometimes a sentence will end with two or three exclamation points (or question marks, for that matter). I felt like I was reading a note written by a high school student.

But if there are issues with the form, how's the content of this novel? I must admit I was initially intrigued by the mystery presented, but as the book went on, it got more and more ridiculous and over-the-top to the point where, by the end, I really didn't care what happened. The protagonist is constantly popping pills and taking drinks, and these are described very specifically. I found Jack Madson more and more unlikable the more I read. And that's not to mention the absurd, unrealistic, and unfounded romance he finds with porn star Havana Spice. The first person narration often follows a nicely done hard-boiled style, but it frequently devolves into a very flowery and philosophical prose. No reason Jack Madson can't be a philosophical, hard-boiled detective type, but the style really drags down the pace.

So, overall, I'm giving the book two stars instead of one, because I believe an interesting story is buried here somewhere (and I love the disturbing, graphic images and descriptions we get at times), but there's just too much to cut through to get to it.

Joanne says

I thought this book was fantastic! I won an advanced reading copy from Goodreads, and there were quite a few typos throughout the novel that really bothered me, but hopefully those will be fixed in the final edition.

The imagery is very powerful, although a little gorier than the books I would normally read, but the storyline was riveting. I found a few spots that were a little confusing to me that I think would have been clearer if I had read the first book in the series, but they weren't so confusing as to make it impossible to follow the rest of the story. All in all, an excellent novel and I'll definitely be reading the rest of the books in the series!

Michelle Nichols says

I won this book through Goodreads as a first reads edition. There are spoilers in this review!!!!

The copy that I received of this book was an arc copy. I hope that there will be an edited version because there are a number of typos throughout the entire novel. The actual story of this book was intriguing. I mean come on it starts out with a guy finding a human head completely skinned in the trunk of his car. What's not to be intrigued by? All in all the story itself was pretty cool, very dramatic. However the entire story line is full of ideas that are hard to find realistic.

Spoilers:

First of all the guy is a PI and all he does is booze and pop pills. For someone who needs his brain to function coherently to solve cases this doesn't seem like a smart move. I get it, he had a hard life walking in on his dad right after he blew his brains out, and he's had a ton of terrible things happen in his career and schooling, but other than his father, those were all his own fault, he never stuck with anything. Also, seriously? This deadbeat, doesn't-have-anything-going-for-him guy ends up sleeping with two porn stars? I think not. And Havana having been sold into the sex slave trade I'm pretty sure wouldn't have willy-billy have offered herself to him, not when it was a lifestyle she never wanted to be in and had been trying to find a way to get out of. I kept thinking the bad guys were going to jump him from a closet or something and they were just using her to get at him. Sadly no. And her son just magically always gets away with the coveted iPad with her deep dark secrets that everyone wants to have? Puhhhlease! He should have at least been kidnapped at some point or something. There weren't really any twists that you couldn't see coming which is generally one of the best things about crime/mystery novels.

And after reading the book I realized that the description listed here gives away the ENTIRE storyline. It's a mystery right? Probably shouldn't give away the "who-done-it" in the description.....

Kittykorn says

A first reads giveaway. I really enjoyed this book, I really felt for Jack Madson he is always down on his luck, I cheered him on throughout this book, it kept me hooked I found it a quick read. I will be reading more of Ron Felber's books.

William Bentrim says

The Kafka Society by Ron Felber

Jack Madson is back and wallowing in self inflicted despair once again. Felber has postulated a despicable group responsible for a wide range of human depravity. Jack falls afoul of this group and is forced into painful introspection. This book is not for the faint of heart, topics and descriptions are nearly painful to read and frankly impossible to comprehend.

Felber can't seem to decide if he is a novelist or a philosopher. His Kafka society is existentialism at it's postulated worse. The laborious introspection Jack experiences is necessary to develop the plot but at times I felt I was back in my MA program examining the dark side of human nature.

The settings and suggested underground settings are thought provoking. A cursory search of the Internet leads me to believe that some of what Felber postulates is possible.

The story twists and turns as if sharing the agony of the participants. It is a disturbing book in many ways.

I can't say I enjoyed it primarily due to the graphic nature of some of the scenes but it certainly was an interesting book. From this and his previous book I can only conclude that Felber has strong feelings that society is overall corrupt. Jack Madson is a true anti-hero.

I recommend the book, it should make you ponder your own reality.

Steve says

I won this book in a first reads giveaway. I found it to be well-written and compelling; however, I think it falls a bit short of the level of realism that makes first-person writing powerful as an illustrative medium.

The story centers on a drug- and alcohol-addicted private investigator who agrees to help an old friend track down a mistress whom he fears may expose their affair and threaten his marriage. As the protagonist digs deeper into the situation, he ends up stumbling upon a secret society involved in unimaginable atrocities such as human trafficking, sexual slavery, and murder to name a few. He ends up in over his head and must find a way out before it's too late.

This book is pretty dark and graphic, which I generally don't care for so much, but I realized as I read it that it kind of comes with the territory here. It must be so in order to accomplish the Kafkaesque portrayal of the protagonist's plight that it pursues. The existentialistic imagery portrayed is really a necessary component if this novel is to hold true to its design.

Five stars if it would have felt more real, which the first-person perspective could have helped with, and also if the story line had been less predictable. This is a good story that's well-written, but for me it lacked some on those two fronts. Still quite an enjoyable read for adults only I would say.

Carol MacInnis says

I won this book from a contest on Goodreads.

Jack Madson, once a D.C. Cop, is now a private investigator where he lives currently at his buddy's Eddie Lawler's Georgetown Inn. Jack has been addicted to booze & amphetamines for sometime and on more than one occasion has experienced blackouts days at a time.

On one particular morning, upon waking up from a booze/drug induced sleep, he find himself being aroused by an extremely beautiful woman who he could not remember meeting or even her name. In fact, he could not remember anything at all about last night. As she left, he went to his window to see his car parked outside and was thankful it was there. Inside his trunk he is shocked and sickened to find a human head! As Jack proceeds to call his lawyer, he realizes how much trouble he is in, until blood work was done on him and it's discovered he was drugged.

Out of the blue, Tom Dougherty, an old school chum Jack has know for 30 years, but is not in close contact with, Tom needs a big favor. Tom is the Asst. Chief to the FBI for the East Coast Operations and he needs Jack to find a hooker/porn star that Tom had a brief affair with and is now blackmailing him. Jack finally agreed to help him, but as he digs deeper, he is finding out some rather unsavoury information on Tom Dougherty. As Jack gets closer and closer to the truth, he very own life is in jeopardy. can he get to the sources before they get to him!

Author Ron Felber writes a fast-paced, exciting, action packed story and I enjoyed it right to the last page!

Chande says

Jack Madson is a man that has had a lot of different careers in his life. I think he's a very restless man that might be why he has such a bad alcohol and drug problem. He is working as a private investigator when one of his old friends asked him for help. He already has his own problems to deal with when he wakes up in bed with Amdar Starr no memory of the last 24 hours and a head in the trunk of his Mustang. You would think he would try to figure out his own mystery before he would take on a job for his old friend . As he gets deeper into the blackmail case of his old friend he finds out things are not as they seem. This is a dark crime novel but a good one. You really have to pay attention or you will miss some key points in this book. I won this book in a goodreads give away and I'm glad that I did it is a very gripping story.

Kate says

"I received this book for free through Goodreads First Reads"

I found this story to be instantly very intriguing. To begin with, you are introduced to the main character Jack Madson, who first off wakes up to find a porn star in his hotel room and then not long after finds a completely skinned human head in the trunk of his car; I mean how can you not be intrigued and pulled into the story by that as the opening!?!?!? As Jack on the mission to figure out why there is a head in his car, he's pulled into all sorts of things that I'm not going to go into as that would spoil it for others. Having now finished the book i found it to be face paced and constantly moving forward, in a way that kept me engaged and intrigued to carry on to see what was going to happen next, as the entire story line is jam packed full of ideas. However some of the scenarios are a little far fetched in my opinion. All in all an enjoyable read.

alexander silagin says

Easy read

Not a bad book although it has some holes in the story. Likeable if somewhat undeveloped characters. Good beach read, better than most books in this genre.

Carol says

This book was sent to me as an ARC through the Goodreads program. It's just not what I expected and not my favorite type of book. I'm still happy to have been given the chance to read and review.

Elaine says

After all the ruckus on Jack Madson's life, he starts a new life as a private investigator to try make up for every wrong he has done in the past. But after a night out, he finds himself in bed with Amber Starr, a stripper, and no memory of what happened the night before. As he was trying to start his day, he finds an unidentifiable human head in the trunk of his car and now, he is considered as a suspect. He tries to uncover the supposed murder but then an old friend, Tom Dougherty, now a head in FBI asks for his help to try shake off Havana Spice, a porn queen, who is blackmailing him after an affair. Thinking of helping an old friend, Jack now also pursues Havana to try stop her from blackmailing Tom. That's when it hits Jack, that this is no ordinary murders, blackmail and whatnot. Everything is a tangled web of mischief done by the Kafka Society and it is up to him to try expose everything before it is too late.

I found the book exciting since I'm the type to read more to uncover more when mystery is involved in the plot. I generally enjoyed the book and would recommend this to those who love reading urban thrillers.

[Click here for the full review.](#)
