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**IAN
RANKIN**
Witch Hunt



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Jack Harvey (Pseudonym) , Ian Rankin

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Witch - infamous, clever, invisible, assassin. Interpol have tried and failed to find her. Now the combined forces of Scotland Yard and MI5 must try the impossible to prevent a major international incident.

Witch Hunt Details

Date : Published 2006 by Orion Books (first published 1993)

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Author : Jack Harvey (Pseudonym) , Ian Rankin

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Genre : Mystery, Crime, Fiction, Thriller, Mystery Thriller, Cultural, Scotland, Audiobook, European Literature, British Literature, Suspense, Detective

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From Reader Review Witch Hunt for online ebook

Sarah Jones says

Started this book thinking it probably wouldn't be as good as the Rebus books and now I stand corrected! It was excellent! Really gripping and interesting, full of tense plot twists that had me gasping out loud.

Isca Silurum says

Journey better than the ending. Clunky at times it feels like an earlier novel. Aimed at a teenage boy market, well men never grow up!

Kenny says

A passable thriller. It pushes along at a reasonable rate, and interplays between the three main characters - two young, and one brought back from retirement, and none feeling particularly original. The plotting is fine enough, but the 'twist' and motivation at the end feels flat and a bit implausible - although a terrorist book with that plot feels bizarrely mundane compared to the real life cases now. It's not bad, but with the London and southern England setting, it still feels perfunctory, rather than the deep, layered and vital Edinburgh he describes in later books.

As an early novel, it's fine - I can see why people score it higher. But compared to most (nearly all) of his Rebus novels, it's just not in the same game. I'm glad he realised this!

Libby says

This was a fast paced read, enjoyable but becoming a little dated as the case might have been solved a lot quicker with the help of mobile phones and the internet! It was written by a young Rankin who clearly thought anyone over 50 was OLD, I wonder what he would think rereading it in his 50's.

Avid Series Reader says

Witch Hunt by 'Jack Harvey' (Ian Rankin) is a standalone thriller (no connection to the Rebus series) set in 1993 London. "Witch" is a clever female assassin who is expert at disguise; successful and elusive for many years, she kept intelligence agencies guessing with her widespread choice of targets.

Dominic Elder, a retired MI5 agent, is obsessed with catching Witch. He's the most knowledgeable of all her past crimes, so despite inter-agency politics, British intelligence requests his help.

Jack Conant, a young CID agent without field experience, gets his big chance for excitement. Eager to learn

from Dominic, he takes whatever risk is necessary to pursue his quarry.

Dominique is a young French agent, with a little more experience than Jack (but not much). She and Jack team up to pursue Witch, with Dominic's guidance. Their mission: to find Witch before she can assassinate a world leader at the upcoming summit in London. Of course, that is not exactly what Witch has in mind. A suspenseful and enjoyable read, although the technology is out-of-date.

Peter Hall says

Rankin is my favourite crime writer and having read all the Rebus (and lately Fox) novels set in Edinburgh I'm filling in some of the gaps in my reading of the back catalogue. Rankin wrote what he calls "Airport Thrillers" to keep the money rolling in whilst working on the Rebus series. This stopped when Rebus took off.

Witch Hunt was written under the pen name of Jack Harvey and published in '93. Whilst there are some differences in style there are plenty of the usual qualities of Rankin here.

The story is about the hunt for a terrorist with an unlikely bunch of police and agents on the hunt both across Europe and England. The central hunter is Dominic Elder, brought out of retirement and not entirely playing everything by the book.

Great characters and a twisting plot that keeps you going make it a good read. The lack of the backdrop of Edinburgh and Fife means it lacks a little as Rankin doesn't portray London and Paris with the same grit.

Angela says

A decent enough spy thriller that becomes better once the individual spy hunters start developing separate personalities, but nothing out of this world fantastic. Witch--an elusive terrorist who is linked to a string of bombings and assassinations by the barest of hints--is an engaging, enigmatic character that eventually falls flat due to the discovery of her ultimate motive. The team tasked with hunting her down are typical archetypes (the new guy looking to prove himself, the smartass, the veterans looking for closure in the case, etc), but are handled decently enough.

The real problem I had with the narrative is that so much of it hinges on the fact that Witch is a woman who is so mysterious! and elusive! due to her ability to (gasp!) adopt a range of disguises and change her appearance and posture at a whim so that no one is ever entirely sure whether or not they are looking at her. Because--obviously--no man could ever change the way he looks with wigs or clothing or different postures. Ever. It's just not possible. At least not in Rankin's world.

I would have liked it much more had the stakes been higher at the end instead of Witch trying to resolve her Mommy and Daddy issues, and had Witch and Elder had more interactions together, or at least more of a pursuit at the end. The conclusion was just too much of a letdown on too many levels for me to rate this any more than 2 stars.

Narimene says

it took me a long time to finish this because of my finals. But it really is an enjoyable read and it's worth my

time. Rankin has succeeded in making me care about the characters and I liked the plot twist at the end.

Leonore says

A far fetched story but well written

Marianne says

Not a bad spy novel- but the character development was a distraction so the novels first half feels clunky. Finally after a satisfying ending I don't see the same of characters in the following Jack Harvey novels - it is literary abuse for a writer to lure readers into investing their empathy and their enthusiasm into a cast characters that are never used again!

James D says

Another very good Ian Rankin novel! This one is not about John Rebus or Edinburgh. It focuses on a young woman assassin (code name Witch), a retired London detective (Dominic Elder) who's been after her for years, and some younger police in London Criminal Investigation Division. CID is competing with Special Branch and some detective work gets done in spite of the politics. Elder is a Rebus-like loner, obsessed with Witch, who might be responsible, a decade or more past, for killing his only daughter and many others in a Paris bombing. She also deeply wounded Elder in a previous meeting, and caused him to retire. Elder is called back to service because he knows Witch better than anyone. He and his small cadre try piecing together all of Witch's devious clues in time to stop her assumed assassination attempt during a summit of world leaders in London. Witch is brilliant, of course, and a chameleon, with lightning reflexes, a macabre sense of humor, and she's always at least one step ahead of Elder and the CID. Great story, good characters, who are deep and complex and troubled. Well worth a read!

Barry Martin Vass says

This was a disappointment. Witch Hunt is a stand-alone book separate from Ian Rankin's Inspector Rebus series, and it just doesn't satisfy. It struck me as being very overwritten, i.e., where a few lines or paragraphs would have sufficed, thousands of words and a great many chapters are thrown at us. Remember those old sci-fi pulps where the writers were paid a penny a word? Yeah, like that.

Rohit Ranade says

finished it in one night (cause the book was due the next day, and till the previous day, could not find myself to read it). But the book started out really well, but slowly started losing its grip, till at the end, the whole plot seems too improbable. on the whole, a boring book.

Morbidblack says

Although a very old book, I first got my hands on this book at a bookstall while waiting for a flight from Amsterdam in 2002. I had not finished reading it and due to the arrival and customs, I misplaced and lost it for good. Although, I searched fervently, I could not get a copy of the book again. Recently, though I finally completed my quest.

As for the book, I would like to give it a 3.5 or so. When it was written, it was more of a newer concept. A female assassin. Especially one with a track record of never missing. An assassin who was an enigma to the point where, people made case studies of her. I realize that each case will be an investigation but investigations reveal tangible/substantial facts. But what was amazing in the case of "Witch" was the lack of substance in the proof. The quest for her capture was purely luck. No hard concrete evidence, just theories and more theories. The theories were nonetheless accurate (otherwise, there wouldn't be much of a story, I suppose).

The book was well written, and introduced characters and settings in line with the story. What blew me off was the ending. Her final kill was personal and messy. In theory, an assassin makes personal kills earlier in their careers as they don't want the threat ie- people identifying them...However, it can be attributed to the fact that she didn't know of her origin. But, if she was as good as the book claimed, she would have known earlier. Moreover, she should/ would have killed off (she attempts to- but that is half-hearten) the detective who had a whole file on her "the witch file". A few kinks in the story but one's that you can always lay fault at "human" nature. Witch is still very much a "human" and what makes her more of an enigma is her humanity...whether be it her odd sense of humor or her childlike need for comfort.

This book makes introductions of an array of characters and at some point, the reader is made aware of a clash in personalities and a likely subplot developing. But, there is not clash and the story moves from beginning to end answering all questions that can be raised. Character development has been Rankin's greatest talent and he does so flawlessly here. He introduces characters with personalities similar to what we expect to see or see in real life. The depth and personality that Rankin introduces to his readers always leaves me in awe.

This book first introduced me to Rankin and later onto Rebus novels. If you read closely enough, you can find the similarities in the manner which characters are revealed to the reader in the rebus series. A must read in my humble opinion.

Kariss says

It started in the Video section of the Library ..how could I resist a film called Rebus ...I love puzzles ... Enjoyed the episodes - different than our American detective shows .. then reading 44 Scotland Street, McCall referenced an author - Ian Rankin hummm familiar sounding name. Ah yes the videos I had watched now I am a fan ...apparently a lot of other people are also as I am on a wait list for the Rebus series ...
