



# Moving Day

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Forty years' accumulation of art, antiques, and family photographs are more than just objects for Stanley Peke—they are proof of a life fully lived. A life he could have easily lost long ago.

When a con man steals his houseful of possessions in a sophisticated moving-day scam, Peke wanders helplessly through his empty New England home, inevitably reminded of another helpless time: decades in Peke's past, a cold and threadbare Stanislaw Shmuel Pecoskowitz eked out a desperate existence in the war-torn Polish countryside, subsisting on scraps and dodging Nazi soldiers. Now, the seventy-two-year-old Peke—who survived, came to America, and succeeded—must summon his original grit and determination to track down the thieves, retrieve his things, and restore the life he made for himself.

Peke and his wife, Rose, trace the path of the thieves' truck across America, to the wilds of Montana, and to an ultimate, chilling confrontation with not only the thieves but also with Peke's brutal, unresolved past.

## Moving Day Details

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Author : Jonathan Stone

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# From Reader Review Moving Day for online ebook

## ?Susan? says

"Great mind trip. "

This was not at all what I expected. I thought it would be some type of caper but not at all as in depth as it went. The thief and victim are more alike than they think. Both are smart and both have learned to outlast and survive. An intense, interesting story that was a great back and forth mind and physical adventure. The old adage may apply, "never under estimate the old bull". Christopher Lane's voice was a great match for the main character.

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## Urs says

I got this book as one of the kindle first free reads for Amazon Prime subscribers. In this book, a seventy something, Stanley Peke, and his wife plan to move more south, but their items are stolen by a fake moving company. Peke ultimately decides that he will get his things back.

It is really deceptive to call this book a thriller, especially with “thriller” being part of the actual title. There was nothing thrilling about this book. It took twenty chapters before any action happened.

There is a lot of stream of consciousness style writing here. While it may be intended to give little more insight to the character, which it really does not, it bored me for the most part. There was more of the characters thoughts than there was action.

This story seems to be more about a Jewish man coming to terms with his past experiences with surviving the Holocaust than it is about being thriller. There is no problem with that, but a book should not be marketed as a thriller if that is the case.

If you are expecting a thriller, then look elsewhere.

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## Max Everhart says

There are thrillers that focus primarily on plot, narratives that, by in large, burn fast and hot and fizzle out quickly. And these can often be very enjoyable, the literary equivalent of eating a Big Mac when you're hungry: it's fast, tastes great . . .but it leaves you hungry again half an hour later.

And then there are slow-burning, perspective-shifting thrillers like Moving Day by Jonathan Stone. This novel is equal parts crime thriller and (unintended) master class in fiction writing. But more on that later. First: the plot.

Peke is a wealthy seventy-two year old retiree who is moving from New York to the beaches of Santa Barbara, California, and on the day before the scheduled move, a seemingly legitimate moving company shows up and transports his belongings to the new home. But then the following day, the actual movers show up, and Peke and his wife realize they've been robbed. Peke, a Holocaust survivor, manages to track his

down his belongings and recovers them. Nick, the sadistic thief behind the caper, then raises the stakes by kidnapping Peke in exchange for the stolen goods. What I dig about this plot is the utter low-tech-ness of the crime itself. Nick is that unicorn rare criminal who has intelligence, patience, and discipline, which makes him the perfect adversary to Peke, who also possesses those qualities.

For my money, the character development and the never-ending supply of brilliantly written passages are what make this book so satisfying. Stone manages to capture the internal worlds of a career criminal and a Holocaust survivor, and this frequent shifting of perspective adds layer upon layer of meaning to the narrative. Below I've quoted a few fantastic passages from the book, so you get an idea of what I'm writing about.

From a passage where Peke discovers outside the thief's hideout a large pile of trash: "He feels that simple realization like a weight on him. Amid the exhilaration and excitement of retrieving his belongings, a sudden weight of brooding. . . This is where it will end up for the thief, too. Their odd communion. Meaninglessness piled high."

From a passage where Peke remembers being in Poland evading the Nazis: "He watches the bug. . . He looks at it. Watches it scoot frantically around on his broad, ancient, creviced palm, looking for a path, an exit. . . Then, impulsively, he slaps the black bug into his mouth, bites down a few times, hears and feels the unmistakable crunch in his jaw, then swallows."

Paragraphs like these are everywhere in this book, and *Moving Day* is worth reading for the pure joy of language alone.

Bottom line, this thriller inches along at a snail's pace, builds the tension very, very slowly, yet very, very effectively. You live and breathe in Peke's world, in Nick's world, and that level of realism makes for a highly readable book. Put another way: *Moving Day* is no Big Mac, and Jonathan Stone is no short order cook. *Moving Day* is a complex entree with a multitude of tastes and textures, and Jonathan Stone is a master chef.

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## **Kemper says**

I noticed the ads for this here on Goodreads and thought the premise sounded interesting, but I wasn't in any great hurry to check it out. Then it was one of those super cheap deals on my Kindle so I figured I'd give it a shot.

And that's how they get you. Well played, Amazon. Well played indeed.

This does have a great hook for a story. Seventy-two year old Stanley Peke and his wife Rose have accumulated a house full of valuables and memories over the years, but they want to move to a smaller more manageable place in California so they hire a moving company to transport their stuff across the country. After almost everything they own has been packed, loaded and driven off, the Pokes learn that they've been the victim of a clever scheme in which a gang of thieves show up before the real movers and take off with an entire house worth of loot.

Next time just buy your friends some pizza and beer to con them into helping you, Stanley.

Most people would cash their insurance check and grieve for the loss of the mementos that can't be replaced, but Stanley isn't your average silver fox. He spent his childhood hiding from Nazis in the woods of Poland and came to America after the war with no family and not a penny to his name. The theft of the things he spent a lifetime acquiring as part of his building a family is something that he refuses to abide and when he sees a chance to track down the thief who led the crew Stanley decides to get it all back without involving the cops. However, the ringleader Nick had his own hard-luck upbringing as an orphaned street kid which has left him with a ruthless nature and the firm belief that whatever he steals is now his so the clash between the two strong-willed men become about more than who ends up with the stuff.

This is marketed as a thriller, and there are definitely a lot of those elements and enough action to make it part of that category. But it actually doesn't read like a thriller for most of the book. A large part of it is spent inside Stanley's head as he reflects on his past, how it shaped him and the life he's lived since. Stone was far more concerned with Stanley and Nick as characters than how the plot would be resolved.

That makes the book more 'literary' (For lack of a better term.) than what I was expecting, and at first I was pleasantly surprised at the many facets that Stone was exploring with Stanley about being a Jewish survivor of the Nazis who came to America and lived the ultimate immigrant success story.

The problem is that this is all gone over a little too much with clear conclusions drawn and laid out for the reader. Stone wants to make sure we understand every angle and by kicking over every rock he really hasn't left the reader anything to think about. It's not a case of full-on anvil dropping (view spoiler), but there's little sub-text left by the end of it.

So it's got the pieces of a good crime story with an interesting lead character that was aiming to be a bit more than your average thriller, but it is so concerned with making sure that we got the point that it laid out all its themes like a road map which left me feeling like someone who considered me slightly stupid had been slowly explaining himself to me for several hours.

Also posted at Kemper's Book Blog.

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## **Tiffany says**

I wish I had been able to sit down and read this from cover to cover, all at once. This was a gripping tale of cat and mouse chase, entitlement, vengeance, and self exploration. It was a non-stop thrill ride, and I honestly had no idea how things might end. Rich, eloquent prose. Complex, intriguing characters. A thrilling and suspenseful plot. An exploration into the depths of the human psyche. I enjoyed this book so much that I will likely read it again in order to savor the more psychological aspects. I was reading quickly this time, because I could not wait to find out what would happen next! A must read!

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## **Pamela says**

### **A life revealed through thrills**

This is not the thriller that you might anticipate. Huge amounts of internal dialogue. And, it is this dialogue that counts. You must be patient as you read.

***Moving Day*** is one of the most rewarding stories I have experienced in a long time. The characters are iconic, the psychology is soundly fascinating. It will make you think; seeing the ways of the survivor, the parts of the self, that, long-surviving, emerge in the present—always in the presence of intelligent self-awareness, which is, by its very nature, honest.

It is a thriller in the physical sense: human characters, actions, locations, things, stories. It is a thriller in the psychological sense: childhood survival, chosen lives, unsurprising human emotions. Death comes unnaturally, but consequentially. Life comes with engagement, and a savoring.

Not a parable, but a vignette of darkness and light; carefully, soulfully, and empathetically crafted by a gifted author.

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### **Eric Wallace says**

Don't be fooled by the subtitle suggesting this is "a thriller". You're not likely to be thrilled--at least not for the first half of the book, since almost nothing happens in the way of action. Instead, you're given an insipid recounting of the thoughts and minds of characters who are busy not doing anything. The characters aren't talking to each other either, so there's little dialog to get in the way of the inner monologues in this plodding character study.

Now, you might fear the author is breaking the old writing rule of "Show, don't tell"--but never fear, reading the characters' minds doesn't tell you much either. It seems that Stone (the author, not the mineral) is attempting to create suspense by hinting at a big reveal to come. You see, the protagonist has a dark secret from his past (mini-spoiler: he's a Holocaust survivor) that he hasn't even told his wife. It seems he hasn't even fully informed himself, since somehow the stream-of-consciousness thoughts we readers must swim through never quite clarify what he's so afraid/ashamed of. Maybe he's forgotten his own secret, despite his insistence that his mind remains sharp at 72 years of age.

Perhaps I'm being too harsh; maybe the book gets really exciting at the end. (Hand-to-hand combat with an elderly man! Illegal drugs--for blood pressure management--smuggled from Canada! Suddenly he remembers every detail of his previous life in Shirley MacLaine's body! He gets his stuff back!) But I'll never get there to find out, because this book just can't get moving.

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### **Steve says**

This book should have been titled, "Property Stolen, Waxing Philosophical". Not impressed with this one, just sort of "meh". The premise sounded good, sounded believable, and should have resulted in a better story, IMO.

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### **Texx Norman says**

I have a Kindle, one that is just for reading, and I saw *Moving Day* for sale for only 99 cents. I figured it

would be dull and forgettable, but since I'd never sampled one of these 99 cent books I thought I'd give it a try. The protagonist is like 71 years old, and me, 64 thought I'd like to read about an old guy hero. I'm starting not to relate to the 30 year old hero how has a small prostate and lots Low T problems. Well, I finished MOVING DAY by Jonathan Stone, and I have to say I thought it was just great. There was this clever inciting incident: criminals pose as movers and steal a wealthy older couple's entire house's content. I couldn't imagine how the protagonist could track down and get his stuff back, but he did. The plot is good. It is a thriller and, at least for me, it qualified as a page turner. But this book was more than a neat idea, or a thriller, and more than just a great book for senior guys like me to read. MOVING DAY is not only a good read; the writer has attacks of poetry from time to time. I think one of the things I liked most about this novel are the writer's times when the narrative of a character's thoughts becomes very, very close to being poetry. For example [the line breaks are mine turning the passage into found poetry]:

a scared silence  
growing in tone  
enlarging somehow  
a silence sacred,  
but common,  
natural,  
a quiet silence  
is preferable to talk.

OR consider this short passage:

I want everything  
because I don't know  
what I want and  
no matter what I get,  
or what I take  
it is never fulfilling.  
Does calm come from  
clarity of thought, or  
the simplicity of  
human connections perhaps?

The doubts and reflections,  
the ruminations said in  
dulcet tones  
the times, the many times  
of disconnections  
or irremediable separateness  
from each other. . .

Another aspect of the writing I found delightful was this play of story lines. There is some parallelism going on, where the story takes our protagonist full circle. The similarities of the old man's current and childhood experiences develop a sort of synergy. When the protagonist was a 7 year old Jewish boy he was forced to hide from the Nazis and survive against all odds by luck and resolve. The author takes specific incidents from that 7 year old child and the lessons learned then provide the old man with experience and a tactical advantage over unscrupulous pudding headed adversaries that outnumber him.

Jonathan Stone is gaining success and that is as it should be. When you have a talent and you have the determination to learn your craft, and if you can keep at it with very little positive feedback, the plight of most writers, and if you can get to the place where you tell a good story and your telling is not just good, but it raises the bar for readers and envious writers alike, well you have earned our attention and it should be rapt attention.

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## Kelsea says

I got this through Kindle Firsts via my Amazon Prime membership. It's not my usual genre choice, but it seemed like the most promising of the four options, based on the Goodreads reviews. Thank goodness it was free, or I would have been even more annoyed about wasting time *and* money.

The most prominent I had thought throughout the book was this: *Ugh*. This barely deserved two stars. Stanley, the "victim", is odd, annoying, vengeance-bent, and obsessive. I believe that if done right, flashback stories can be incredibly powerful and add to a story. In *Moving Day*, the flashbacks only served to litter an already-uninteresting plot and cut up the flow of the novel.

I absolutely couldn't stand the way the book was written. Tons and tons of short, choppy, sentences with repetition abound and endless psychoanalysis. *He's upset. He also survived the Holocaust. We get it. Now can we please move on?*

Stanley's wife and son (and other minor characters) occasionally get to slip in their viewpoints, but none of them add anything to the plot. The strange side-character viewpoints do serve as very minor relief to the annoying back-and-forth between Stanley and Nick, but also just remind the reader about how both main characters are dislike-able and oddly obsessive. Stone did attempt to draw some parallels between their backgrounds near the end, but at this point I was far beyond caring and just wanted the book to *end* already.

The fact that I finished this book just shows how desperate I am for reading material. The only interesting part was that it at least it made me think for a bit about how the premise is probably realistic... in that a moving day scam is probably a real thing, though I'm not interested enough to research it further.

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## Kathy says

Each month, Amazon Prime offers, for free, a choice of 1 of 4 books to be published the following month. Usually, I choose the "dysfunctional family" category but, since May's selection didn't intrigue me, I decided to try the "thriller" category. And have discovered an author of imagination and style and new to me!

Usually, a thriller features: guns blazing, bombs blasting, cars banging. Then there's Jonathan Stone's definition of a thriller: a seemingly simple, well-planned theft of goods that goes smoothly...at first. However, the band of thieves have tangled with an old man scarred by the worst kind of terror years before the thieves encounter him and their action looses in him a primal need for revenge which leads to a personal resolution of his past. An old man's cunning brings us half way through the story before physical violence occurs. Believe me, by then you are rooting for its use by the good guys!



This is not a book to be read while multitasking; however, concentration to the story will be rewarded. Not only will you be intrigued by the plot development but you will wonder at the mind that can think up this series of monumental surprises!

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## **Robin Tauer says**

### **Survival**

What a beautifully written story. Like any good thriller, this story is filled with the unexpected and the expectation of danger. But this story is so much more. While the plot is winding and unwinding, the characters are revealed in a way that most thrillers never attempt. The psychology of survival is presented here more acutely than I have ever experienced. From beginning to end the struggle is with the past history and present instinct of each character to survive, from their past and in their present conflicts. It is the timeless question of man's inhumanity to man, looking, as always, for the answer or resolution that cannot be solved.

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## **exnccgal says**

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1. Potential insurance fraud? I assume they'd gotten a big fat check from their insurance company, and yet got their stuff back... so they shouldn't have kept

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## **Patrick says**

In the afterword the author says this had been in a drawer for twelve years--it really should have stayed there. I had to look the author up to see if he had other books because this seemed like a first novel to me. Overall it's an overwritten, underpowered novel that doesn't really qualify as a "thriller."

The base concept is fairly interesting. An old couple gets taken by some con men who pretend to be their movers and steal their stuff. Except the old man, Stan Peake, refuses to let the thieves win. Instead he uses a tracking device to hunt down the stolen items and retrieve them. But that's only the first act. The second act takes a bizarre turn as the thief-turned-victim tries to steal back the stolen goods stolen from him with the help of Neo-Nazis.

In the first act, Stan and his wife Rose very leisurely follow the criminals. This is punctuated with a lot of navel gazing as Stan ruminates how surviving the Nazi occupation of Poland. The fact he's a survivor is pounded time and time again until I really got sick of hearing it. As for the thief, the author throws in something about him being bisexual for no reason and it contributes nothing to the story. Stan's son is tossed into the plot almost as an afterthought while the Neo-Nazis don't even get names.

Besides the lack of pacing the author seems to have no concept of point-of-view, randomly switching from one character to another so the scene is never really anchored. Overall it's the kind of sloppy execution you'd expect from a story that had been rotting in a drawer.

That is all.

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## **Patrice Hoffman says**

Moving Day is a suspenseful thriller about two men who refuse to claim defeat. Almost immediately Stanley Peke thinks there's something wrong with his moving men. He was certain that they arrived a day early to pack up his life. As each item leaves the safety of the house he's shared with his wife for 40+ years, Stanley Peake figures his increasingly unreliable memory is to blame for how he's managed to screw up his moving dates. After spending a night in an empty huge house with his wife, he wakes to a morning quite different from its predecessor.

Stanley opens the door to the true moving men. The (true) moving men reveal to him that his initial recollection of the moving date was accurate and that he's been the victim of a crime. At the age of 72, Stanley finds all the proof of his wealth and accomplishment has been taken right from under his nose. He's unwillingly been forced into the role of being a victim. That's a title he refuses... no matter what.

Unable to resolve his new-found status in life, Stanley decides he is no one's victim, and has escaped threats greater than the present situation, goes on a mission that should result in him getting back all his things. Things... plain ol' perishable items.

I sometimes find it hard to accept that my car is a perishable item. It defines who I am at some moments. After years of driving a car that was embarrassing, at best, having a car that was a current model meant the world to me. Like Stanley, and his nemesis Nick, I figured that item defined who I was/am. I could never be content with the memories provided driving my hamster car with the sunroof open and the music blaring. Any threat to my car was/is a threat to me.

Jonathan Stone introduces readers to two men who are hellbent on proving there's no such thing as surrender. Stanley follows Nick, by clever means, in order to get back his possessions. The only problem is that Stanley never took into account that once Nick got ahold of those items, he felt a certain entitlement to them.

Nick travels the states making victims of wealthy older citizens by posing as a moving man who's been hired to oversee the safe travel of their personal effects. He has made a victim of many unsuspecting elderly citizens he feels doesn't deserve their proofs of life because he's had the bad fortune of being raised without. Nick is scum. Very intelligent scum.

Moving Day forces readers to consider the lengths they will go for their "trophies". Stanley came from a world of nothing, similarly to Nick, yet overcame his obstacles to accumulate a wealth that made chasing these items pointless. It's all about the mere audacity. We hear it in politics all the time. How dare the poor think that they are entitled to healthcare, food, or housing provided by the ones who work hard, all but forgetting how it felt to wonder where their next meal would come from. Too much?

Basically, Jonathan Stone provides readers with a great cat and mouse thriller that begs either character to scream checkmate. Stanley is one of the best "old persons" I've read about in a long time. I mean, this guy is the senior citizens Rambo. Stone allows us a view into his past by making that past an antagonist as formidable as Nick, the thief, is. I loved Stanley.

I don't have many, if any, gripes with this novel. Moving Day is fast-paced, engaging, and fun. Jonathan

Stone forced me to consider whether or not the perishables I accumulate really define who I am. What lengths would I go to in order to prove that my worth can be measured by the items I accrue? And most importantly, would it be worth proving at all?

*Copy provided by Thomas & Mercer via Netgalley*

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