



## No Way Back

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Jimmy Thane knows all about crossroads. Every time he's faced with one he's taken the wrong path. At the peak of his career, he chose alcohol. When his job became shaky, he turned to drugs. And when his wife lost faith in him, he turned to other women. Now, Jimmy's clean, and he's at a new crossroad: he's landed the job of a CEO at a failing company in South Florida and has seven weeks to turn it around.

Except, from the moment he enters the building, he senses there's something very wrong—the place is too quiet, too empty. When the police come calling about the disappearance of the former CEO, Jimmy begins to wonder what he got himself into.

Then he discovers surveillance equipment in his neighbor's house, looking straight into his living room. And he begins to notice that his wife isn't just tired, she's terrified, and trying to hide it.

Nothing is as it seems. Jimmy no longer feels like he's living the dream. Instead, he's plunged into the worst kind of nightmare there is. And when he finally gets to the truth, it's more shocking and terrifying than could be imagined.

## No Way Back Details

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Author : Matthew Klein

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## From Reader Review No Way Back for online ebook

### **Josh says**

Holy. Shit. That was an intense read, to say the least. The last, say, 10 pages were a bit out of left field, but the first 450 made up for it.

This is a book that grabs you, brings you along for a ride, then just spits you out when it's done with you.

Not going to ruin it with spoilers, but the ending was quite unexpected. Quality read.

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### **Lou Tennant says**

I was lucky enough to receive this book for free through the Goodreads First Reads offer.

The main character in Matthew Klein's No Way Back is an unappealing man by the name of Jim Thane. A recovering alcoholic, sex addict, gambler, drug addict...there is in truth nothing to like about this man. It is this fact that makes this such a wonderful book. I found that it did not matter that I did not like Jim, I was still drawn into being concerned about his fight for the truth and his inevitable fate. A fate that is definitely not what you at first expect it may be.

This is the best thriller I have read in quite a while. It has an originality about it that is very refreshing, and made it hard for me to put down while I was reading. It does not matter that you start to realize what is going on before the end, as this in a way builds on your expectations of the conclusion.

If you are looking for a thriller that will drag you into the plot at the first page and keep you intrigued with its many twists and turns, then this is it. I feel that Klein will quickly make his way to my favourite author list.

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### **Marleen says**

Jimmy Thane is a human disaster zone. His past is littered with stupid mistakes and fatal decisions. He has been clean for over two years after spending years addicted to everything a man can be addicted to; drink, drugs, women, you name it Jimmy Thane has abused it. And in the middle of all that self-destructive behaviour his five year old son died, a death he blames himself for. So Jimmy Thane should be grateful; grateful that his wife is still with him and grateful that an old friend has offered him one last opportunity to redeem himself professionally. He has been given seven weeks to save a failing software company from certain bankruptcy; seven weeks to do what appears to be impossible.

But from the moment Jimmy Thane starts his new job things feel wrong. When he arrives at the company the place is nearly deserted. The former CEO has disappeared without a trace under mysterious circumstances and the fact that somebody has been cheating the company out of several millions is so glaringly obvious that even a blind person should have been able to see it. And that is just as far as his work is concerned. At

home things aren't right either. Thane's wife, Libby, is behaving strangely. She disappears from their house without any explanation and appears to be either afraid or angry most of the time. And while he knows that he should be grateful that she is still with him, Thane can't explain why she is behaving the way she is right now.

With the FBI investigating the disappearance of his predecessor, the disturbing find of a huge amount of money in an abandoned house and the friend who gave him the job more or less asking him to not notice everything that is wrong with the software company, Thane knows he has landed himself in a position where he could lose everything. Who is his mysterious neighbour who appears to be keeping an eye on him while avoiding actually meeting him? Why is he the only patient of the shrink he visits? And why is his wife actively discouraging him from investigating what exactly is going on in the company he is trying to save?

The truth is more shocking than Jimmy Thane could ever have imagined.

Actually, scrap that last line; the truth is more shocking than the reader could ever have imagined. This is one of those thrillers where absolutely nothing is what it appears to be; the sort of book where every revelation only leads to more questions.

“No Way Back” is the ultimate page-turner. While the story starts off innocuously enough it isn’t long before the tension starts creeping in. There may not be any real violence or obvious danger in the first part of the book, but the darkness is palatable underneath the apparently smooth story. And so the reader finds themselves caught in a trap. There is a constant need to know what is happening, why it is happening and who the person orchestrating everything might actually be.

This is a well written thriller. Matthew Klein knows how to pull his audience in and keep them hooked. I don’t usually enjoy books in which none of the characters are truly sympathetic but that fact didn’t bother me in this book. In fact, Jimmy Thane is the sort of character that keeps the reader wondering; is he bad, weak, stupid, a little bit of all of those? Or is he actually very clever and just a victim of his own circumstances? Every time you think you have got it figured out the events in the story will change your perception until the very moment that everything is revealed and you stare at the page in complete and utter shock.

This is a thriller that will draw you in and keep you hooked until all the secrets have been revealed, leaving you both amazed and shocked. In short, this is a captivating read.

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## **Ken Heard says**

Matthew Klein really conveys the paranoia and gonzo freakout associated with meth, money and attempts at overcoming addictions. The novel's protagonist, Jim Thane, is a recovering addict of drugs, booze, women, gambling, you name it. He tries to set his path straight when he takes over a failing computer software company in Florida.

But as he delves into his new job, he discovers missing money and missing people. His wife is behaving weirdly and he, himself, starts acting irrational. Is it the circumstances he's in or is it the struggles of overcoming addition? That's what drives this fast-paced book. It left me wondering over and over, 'What's really happening here?' And just as I think I figure something out, there's another turn that leaves the reader mentally whiplashed.

Klein writes in first person, present tense. That's a hard format to convey everyone's thoughts and actions, but Klein does it well to show the paranoid Thane is experiencing. In fact, it even works better since this novel is solely Thane trying to figure out what's going on. We are experiencing the same confusion he is. It's like reading in 3-D.

This is a hard plot to write about without giving away spoilers, but the theme here is: Nothing is as it seems. Remember the movie Total Recall with Schwartzeneger on Mars? Think that, but throw in the drug addiction, Russian mobsters, torture, sex, a freaky wife and lots and lots of money.

When I began the book, I was first put off by Thane's character. I didn't know if I could become sympathetic with a meth head who is given his 12th or 13th chance to recover. I thought, 'Not another edgy, sarcastic guy who makes one-line jokes.' But as I read on, I could see Thane's development. He really was trying, and that added to the conflict of the novel. Thane was faced with some crossroads. Again, not to spoil the book, but in one instance, Thane debated about just ignoring what was going on and being a money-collecting CEO puppet. Thane was also confronted with a lit pipe of meth. Does he return to his old habits, or is he strong enough to soldier on?

This is one of those books that you really need to wrap your mind around to get it, and it leaves you thinking well after you've read the last page and closed the book.

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### **Sue Gully says**

I didn't like this book. I struggled to get into it until about 25% in and then it gripped me for a little while, so I stuck with it and then it got just simply dumb. I agree with another reviewer ... you either hate it or love it. I hated it. Not much of a review but if I say anything else then I'll move into spoilers. Oh except the programmer ... he was believable!!

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### **Katie says**

Ever write a ridiculous story in primary school and then cover your butt by finishing it with "and she woke up and realised it was all a dream..."?

This book is the thriller equivalent. The only reason I'm forgiving it is because the "voice" of the narrator is so clear and enjoyable to start with.

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### **Douglas Lord says**

Klein's crisp, original voice is all at once peppy, funny, snappy, and darkly humorous and this thriller—his first since the cool Con Ed (2007)—is first person—narrated by likable turnaround executive Jim Thane. He's the guy you bring in to replace your incompetent CEO when your company (say, a software maker) is losing beaucoup money (say, upwards of \$3M a month) and you can't make it stop. Jimmy is bright and genuinely motivated to redeem himself after bottoming out, derailed by booze, drugs, and gambling. This is apparently

his 12th or 13th attempt to kick-start his life; his boss describes it as “last stop on the Loser Express.” Jimmy puts it more bluntly, confessing that “Desperate suggests more dignity than I actually had. Pathetic might be a better word.” But the clock is ticking; he has about seven weeks before the company, Tao, folds. He concludes that Tao is “like a high tech grease trap—all drippings, no meat,” and the deeper he digs, the weirder things get. Why did the former CEO disappear? Why can he still sell Tao’s software when it is obviously defective? Is that a Russian Mafia-looking guy living next door, is that a Cyrillic tattoo on the secretary, is this really an FBI agent? Klein does a masterful job of upholding Jimmy’s rationalizations for the reader—right up to the bitter end. Refreshingly, and unlike many thriller authors out there[2], Klein assumes intelligence on the part of his readers. VERDICT Thoroughly enjoyable and compelling from start to finish.

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### **Maggie Franz says**

Wow. Matthew Klein, wow. In his novel *No Way Back* Matthew Klein has...well that one just about left me speechless. This novel, is a thriller in a class of its own. After reading the book, I sat trying to find something to compare it to, to find some way to describe it to you. The only thing I could liken it to is like a mountain bike ride through western Pennsylvania. Bear with me here. The story maintains a steady progression through the plot's undulations, a good pace interjected with juicy or exciting details, like a well placed rock garden or stream. Just when you think you get your bearings and know where it is going, the trail twists again and sends you in a whole different direction. As you are nearing the end, climbing uphill to the climax of the plot, you're expecting a nice leisurely conclusion or a nice short downhill section. Klein throws in a switchback and sends you up one last steep climb. When you reach the end of the trail, at the very top of the hill, it all suddenly becomes clear. You're left exhausted but completely satiation - to the point where you need a moment to collect yourself, catch your breath and take it all in after one hell of a ride.

Read More of the Review here: <http://www.blackdogspeaks.com/way-back/>

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### **Ruth Ann says**

At first, we are cheering for Jimmy Thane, hoping for success.

The product his company should be producing doesn't really exist, as something that is marketable, and it seems like no employees are working to improve it.

Then, we notice Libby, his wife, is nervous, and we think maybe she has been blackmailed, or, at least, received a strong threat of some sort. Why doesn't Jimmy recognize this?

Jim begins to uncover things at his company that don't add up and yet he doesn't follow up.

Ach!!! Ultimately, Jim Thane is the complete *unreliable narrator* - because he doesn't know who he is!

My questions are...What was the purpose of Tao? Just for laundering money? Or is it a way for Gholt Gedrosian to have his make-believe, forgiven life? How did he (or they) get so many people to make it all happen?? Are the players those who owe Gholt money or (shudder) favors? In the epilogue, in order to have his new situation set up, more people would have been killed. How does this fit with his being reborn and needing forgiveness? I am truly unclear about these things.

I did read the last four chapters twice.

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### **Francesca says**

This would have been a 5 star review but I had to drop it down because I didn't like the ending. Yes, I enjoy books with a twist but not when it's such a twisty-twist that everything you've read so far becomes null and void.

I really enjoyed the first two-thirds of *No Way Back*. It starts out normally enough but of course, we know things will slowly tip upside down. The further down the rabbit hole that Jimmy and the reader fall, the more addicting the story becomes until nothing makes sense anymore and everyone is potentially an enemy. And then, for me, it just became a tad on the silly side.

I don't mind books with ambiguous endings but this one just didn't sit right with me. It could have done with a lot more explanation.

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### **Dave says**

Struggled whether to give it 2 or 3 stars. The book kept me gripped until the last 20-30 pages. It got, how can I put it, stupid after that, as if the author hadn't really thought it through and had to throw in an ending. If the story ending gripped me like the rest of the book, easily 5 stars. But the ending really disappointed. I was left very disappointed

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### **Miles says**

Full review on my blog - <http://www.milorambles.com/2013/03/02...>

*No Way Back* by Matthew Klein is one of those books you'll either love or hate! Jimmy Thane is one of those characters you'll love getting to know or feel exasperation at every turn.

A curious book, *No Way Back* was a frustrating and uncomfortable read in so much as it had me on edge from beginning to end. Jimmy is an alcoholic, a drug addict, a sex addict and with every turn of the page I was just waiting for him to explode, to make a wrong decision and continue down the wrong path despite his strive for redemption and the help of his best friend. I could feel the pressure building with every turn of the

page and as the book matured my likeness for Jimmy diminished. He's not a likeable character – at all. He has nothing going for him. In fact I'd go so far as saying that if he could watch you reading the book, Jimmy couldn't care less!

But taking all this into account – and this is where Matthew Klein has been clever – this book is a real page turner. I hadn't expected it to be. Despite thinking the protagonist was just asking for trouble I still wanted to read on, watch the car crash as I drove past, feast in its despair and helplessness. The narrative certainly helps. It's fast, fluent and intelligently crafted and the pace is solid throughout.

The structure is also solid; a good foundation sucks you in and despite what I've said above you can't help but continue reading! It's like watching a scary horror film in the cinema, you know with the music changing to an eerie tune that someone's going to get it, you watch with your hands poised over your eyes ready to jump. You know it's coming but you still read on!

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### **Karen says**

"The perfect thriller for everyone who has ever worked in a corporate environment" may not exactly sound like much of a recommendation, and early on in *NO WAY BACK*, thriller fans could be excused for wondering what on earth they are doing in a story that seems obsessed with the mechanics and machinations of high-tech company restarts. Stick with it. All is not as it seems.

It goes without saying that Jimmy Thane has had a rather chequered background, and initially it seems like he's struck it lucky with the chance to steer a money sink company in the high-technology world out of the doldrums. The job's been given to him by an old friend, a venture capitalist with a lot of money at risk in this company. On the personal side, it's quickly obvious that his past has had a very direct impact on his relationship with his wife, which is fraught. And whilst things at work rapidly become quite complicated, somehow what's going on at home seems oddly passive yet tense at the same time.

With a story like this it's almost impossible to explain some things without getting into massive spoilers, so proceeding with caution, early on you may be wondering what on earth this is all about. Apart, that is from some very telling and quite funny observations about the various personality types that do pop-up in high tech companies with sales and marketing arms. But really there's doesn't seem to be a lot all that threatening or worrying, unless it was your money going down the company drain. There's also some rather obvious repetition which seemed a little overt and off-putting. It does seem to take quite a while for anything particularly "thrilling" to happen although all the time, there's something just not quite right about Thane, his wife, their relationship and the people around them. A lot of that, on the face of it, could be explained by his past, and yet, there's something else. Once the story gets into the revelation phase, lots of things start to fall into place, and a lot of things fall somewhere slightly different.

In many thrillers it's rather easy to see where the story is heading. The good guys struggle, the bad guys get it in the neck, world order is restored and everybody goes home for tea. Nothing is quite that straightforward in *NO WAY BACK* and it has to be said, regardless of how much you think nothing's happening, or that you know what's happening or where all this is going, stick with it. There's more twists and turns in this tail than your average ... twisty-turny thing.

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## Amy says

Gird your loins, faithful readers, because this book will take you on a ride the likes of which you have not experienced since, well, a long, long time.

Post-rehab for drugs, booze, and broads, Jimmy Thane is at the end of his tether. He's been forced to move from the west coast to hot, sweltering, Florida, where he's been installed as the CEO of a company in deep, deep trouble. Sort of similar to the deep, deep trouble in which Jimmy himself is in.

Jimmy's marriage is also suffering, and his wife repeatedly tells him not to screw this up. You sense, as much as you are told, that Jimmy is a bad bet as husband material, and you empathize with his wife.

You also empathize with Jimmy, whose desperation to right his flagging ship is palatable. When you screwed up as much as he did, you cling to anything that will help you climb out of the morass, even if it's a company in dire straits. Adding an extra sense of urgency is the timetable Jimmy has been given: he has seven weeks to weave his magic.

As Jimmy digs in, he receives one disturbing puzzle piece after another. Russian mobsters, a "he who shall not be named" bad guy, weird (and more than slightly suspicious) hypnotists, and creepy neighbors amp up the suspense. To compound a mood fraught with despair and fear, every time Jimmy seems to get close to understanding what brought him to Florida in the first place, someone either dies or Jimmy is told to back off.

This book will take you on a RIDE. There are as many plot twists as there are whipping turns on a roller coaster, and you will be forgiven if you occasionally (or in my case, more than occasionally) are confused by who's whom.

Matthew Klein is one helluva storyteller. You will not be able to put this down once you start, so consider yourself forewarned.

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## Rose says

DNF I gave up at chapter 8. It reminded me too much of work! Other reviews indicate that they found this novel gripping, perhaps I should have persevered, but I just wasn't hooked.

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