

The Last Death of Jack Harbin

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A LIBRARY JOURNAL BEST BOOK OF 2014!

Right before the outbreak of the Gulf War, two eighteen-year-old football stars and best friends from Jarrett Creek, Texas, signed up for the army. But Woody Patterson was rejected and stayed home to marry the girl they both loved, while Jack Harbin came back from the war badly damaged. The men haven't spoken since.

Just as they are about to reconcile, Jack is brutally murdered. With the chief of police out of commission, it's up to trusted ex-chief Samuel Craddock to investigate. Against the backdrop of small-town loyalties and betrayals, Craddock discovers dark secrets of the past and present to solve the mystery of Jack's death.

The Last Death of Jack Harbin Details


Date : Published January 7th 2014 by Seventh Street Books (first published January 1st 2014)

ISBN : 9781616148713

Author : Terry Shames

Format : Paperback 253 pages

Genre : Mystery, Fiction

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From Reader Review The Last Death of Jack Harbin for online ebook

Monical says

Pretty good mystery from a "new-ish" writer. The plot gets a bit thick in places, and I thought there was an extra plot twist thrown in for no good reason, but I liked the characters and the main plot perked along well.

Stacy says

Liked this one even better than the first one. Again, the characters were very well written, even the minor ones. And the mystery was a good one. Enjoyed spending time with the main character again. On to the third book!

Karen says

This was an interesting plot, with three best friends in high school torn apart because of perceived loyalties and the meaning of friendship.

The killer was amazingly hidden in plain sight.

Because this is written in first person. I was occasionally thrown out of the story at times, but overall I just completely enjoyed the ride.

I borrowed a copy from the public library and assigned this author as our September group read.

Barb says

I enjoyed this book very much. Well written, I enjoyed all the characters and the setting. I like Samuel Craddock and will be looking for more. I am not a small town girl and lived in one as a child and vowed to never live in one again, though this town seems pretty nice.

Pat Harris says

Excellent book!

I feel comfortable with the characters, especially Samuel Craddock, with whom I would have coffee anyday!

Time to get the next in the series!

(And thank you, Timothy Hallinan, for the recommendation.)

Robert Intriago says

I enjoyed this book as much as the first Samuel Craddock mystery. It takes place in the same town as the previous book. The investigation involves the murder of a handicapped Gulf War veteran, whose brother has ties to a cult leader in Waco, Texas. What I like about the book is the simplicity of the story and the reality of the characters. Ms. Shames tries to keep her story within the bounds of credulity and never tries to force the narrative. I hope she continues the series, since I plan to continue to buy her books.

Katherine says

This second in the Samuel Craddock series is as good as the first. Being a native Texan, I like finding authors writing mysteries set in Texas - just to see if they can write and IF they can DO Texas. Ms. Shames does both quite nicely. Jarrett Creek and inhabitants are the real deal - their like can be found in small Texas towns I know. And just in case you think that football mania is exaggerated, I assure you that it is NOT. That mania drives this story. The characters continue to be entertaining and well-drawn, especially Samuel Craddock, reminding me at times of Craig Johnson's Walt Longmire. The action is well-paced, with new revelations to keep things lively. I'm looking forward to the next installment and recommend you start the first.

Lesa says

Fans of Craig Johnson's Walt Longmire might want to try Terry Shames' Samuel Craddock mysteries. Craddock is cut from the same cloth, a lawman who understands people. But, Craddock's small Texas town of Jarrett Creek stands alone as a location. I just can't think of a higher compliment than to say Shames' latest book, *The Last Death of Jack Harbin*, reminds me of the best of Craig Johnson's writing.

The townspeople of Jarrett Creek are as crazy about high school football as any other Texas town. So, they cuss out the coach when the team loses at homecoming. And, they put up with Jack Harbin's cranky ways because he was once the best quarterback the town ever saw. Jack has reasons to be angry and bitter. He lost the girl to his best friend in high school. He enlisted just about the time the Gulf War became hot. And, he came back from the war after losing a leg and being blinded. But, he's part of the rhythm of the town. Everyone knew his father would bring him to the Town Cafe between 9 and 11. But, a town's rhythm can be thrown off by death.

No one who really knows the police chief calls on him for help. He's probably suffering from a hangover, or in the process of getting one. Instead, they call the retired chief, Samuel Craddock. So, when a neighbor finds Jack spilled out of his wheelchair, and his father on the ground, she calls Craddock. He's the one who tries to resuscitate Bob Hardin. And, he's the only one who listens to Jack when he expresses doubts about his father's death. But, when Jack himself is murdered, Craddock doesn't know if it's connected to his father's death, or something in Jack's past. It won't take much to push Craddock into asking a few questions.

Terry Shames' biography says she grew up in Texas "and continues to be fascinated by the convoluted loyalties and betrayals of the small town where she has deep family ties." Those convoluted loyalties, betrayals and ties are the strength of this series. Samuel Craddock is a shrewd ex-lawman who knows how to ask questions and dig for answers. He also knows how to keep a secret, something hard to do in a town where news spreads quickly. Shames understands her characters and the community, and she brings them to life. She brings them to life through all of the issues that are part of Texas; high school football, veterans returning to small towns, religious sects and survivalist communities.

If you watched or read Friday Night Lights, you might want to check out The Last Death of Jack Harbin. Fans of Craig Johnson or Steven Havill's Posadas County mysteries might want to check it out. Or, you might just want to check out Shames' Samuel Craddock mysteries if you want a complex, riveting story dealing with contemporary issues. Sometimes the best books are written by authors who aren't on the bestseller lists. The Last Death of Jack Harbin is one of those, a gritty, compelling story.

Terry Shames' website is www.Terryshames.com

Jonathan says

Another solid outing for Samuel Craddock. Love the small town feel of these books. I also really like how the people have to deal with the results of a murder - the grief, the funeral, the bills, the reckoning. Such a small detail but so real.

However, the author did add in something that makes me crazy with mysteries, esp. first person ones - where the protagonist knows something but doesn't let us in on the secret. It happened a few times in this book and it bugs the heck out of me.

But that's okay. Still a great summer read, a book I just race through and I can't wait until the next one.

Izzy Little says

I really enjoyed all of the mystery in this book. Throughout the story, there are multiple mysteries that go on. From the first death to Jack's death, and then from the mystery of Jack's death trying to be solved, the suspense was always there. I recommend this book to anyone who's interested in mystery and suspense, it will have you sitting on the edge of your seat the whole book.

Heather Haven says

Ms. Shames has written a fine mystery set in a world filled with fascinating characters caught up in two deaths, one of which is Jack Harbin. The world is Jarrett Creek, a small Texas town near Waco, playing its own part in the story line. The characters, colorful though they might be, come across so real you feel you know all of them. You may not like all of them, but you know them. There are no extraneous characters in this story, nor words, nor scenes, such is the writing of Terry Shames. From larger characters like Jack Harbin, himself, to smaller ones like Lurline, there is no one who hasn't been written to feel and breathe. Everything matters, everyone matters. But no one more than Samuel Craddock, the protagonist. This is a

man who has an easy, yet memorable way about him. From his bum knee to his love of his cows, here is a man who matters. He has a sense of honor, a smart, soft spoken persona that worms its way into the reader's heart. Long after you put this book down, you will remember Samuel Craddock.

Jon says

This book was very similar in tone, style, and plot to its predecessor. I wrote about that one that it was much better than I had expected, given my prejudices. I had a little more trouble with this one, since the detective took far too long to figure out what was (I thought pretty obviously) going on. A vivid and heartfelt picture, though, of the uncared-for lives of many of our veterans.

Filipe says

I'm not a big fan of mystery books but I really liked this one, its not complicated you don't get lost with what's happening it is an easy book to read and it keeps you think through out the entire book. I like that it's in a small town in Texas and that everyone has a unique relationship with each other, and people with secrets about the murder.

Brace1737 says

I like Samuel Craddock. He lives in a small town in east Texas and enjoys supporting local artists. He hungers for justice even if his years as police chief are fading into memory. He investigates the murders of Bob and Jack Harbin, father and son.

Comment:

This series needs to be better known among mystery readers. Samuel Craddock is a character that you will want to spent a quiet Sunday afternoon with.

Susan says

I really like this series and the character Samuel Craddock. I didn't know who was the killer until the very end. I didn't like this one quite as much as the first but I liked it a lot and I want to read all the books in this series! It has some humor, tragedy, mystery, and fun.
