



The Hammett Hex

Victoria Abbott

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The national bestselling author of *The Marsh Madness* takes rare book collector Jordan Bingham on a trip to San Francisco—home to Dashiell Hammett’s hard-boiled heroes—where nothing is as it seems.

On a getaway to the City by the Bay, book collector Jordan Bingham becomes entangled in a mystery with more twists than Lombard Street...

Jordan has been able to swing a romantic trip to San Francisco with Officer Tyler “Smiley” Dekker on one condition—she must return with a rare copy of Dashiell Hammett’s *Red Harvest* for her irascible employer, Vera Van Alst. For his own part, Smiley is full of surprises. He’s a Dashiell devotee himself—excited to be in the city of Hammett’s hard-boiled heroes like Sam Spade and the Continental Op—and also announces he plans to visit his previously unmentioned estranged grandmother, who lives in an old Victorian on Telegraph Hill.

But the trip goes downhill fast when Jordan is pushed from a cable car and barely escapes death. And when a dark sedan tries to run the couple down, it’s clear someone’s after them—but who? Just like in Hammett’s world, nothing is quite what it seems...

The Hammett Hex Details

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From Reader Review The Hammett Hex for online ebook

Cathy Cole says

In a mystery filled with lovely San Francisco ambiance (especially if you love climbing hills), the writing team known as Victoria Abbott has hit another one out of the ballpark. Besides that setting, there's plenty of tongue-in-cheek humor, narrow escapes, and an excellent whodunit that takes time for readers to put all the pieces in the proper places. The bonus is-- like with the other books in the series-- The Hammett Hex is brushed with a bit of fairy dust reminiscent of the crime fiction great mentioned in the title. (We've already been graced with Agatha Christie, Dorothy Sayers, Rex Stout, and Ngaio Marsh.)

One thing that I particularly enjoyed, although other readers might not, is the absence of some of the secondary characters. Don't get me wrong, Vera Van Alst, Signora Panetone, and Jordan's Kelly relatives are wonderful characters, but they can be overwhelming and have the tendency to elbow their way into the action. It was nice to see how Jordan can handle herself without her usual backup, and now that I've had a little break from curmudgeons, cooks who specialize in ambrosia, and crooks with hearts of gold, I'm raring to see them again.

Quite simply, I love Victoria Abbott's Book Collector mysteries with a passion, and if the series ever ends, I will pout so hard that I'll trip over my lower lip. Haven't met Jordan and the gang? You have to do something about that, quick!

Chris says

I have really enjoyed this series, but this installment was a serious disappointment. I loved the idea of taking our heroine, Jordan, out of Harrison Falls, NY, and sending her and boyfriend/cop Tyler to San Francisco, the setting of Dashiell Hammett's many mysteries. The setups are good. Jordan keeps being attacked. Their hotel rooms are ransacked. And then strange things start happening in the home of Tyler's grandmother.

The problem is the relationships among the characters, especially between Jordan and Tyler. I don't think there was a single scene with the two of them together in which it wasn't mentioned that Jordan's larcenous family didn't take well to her dating a cop. But worse, the authors (Victoria Abbott is a mother-daughter team) have created zero chemistry between these two. They are positively wooden with each other. They talk like they're on their first date rather than more than a year's worth. There is no romance, and a lot of the time I hate the way Jordan treats Tyler. While I think it's silly to have an adult couple stay in separate rooms in a hotel, I'd at least expect some romantic banter back and forth, a little double entendre, a few hugs and kisses. For heaven's sake, people! Instead, when they start discussing marriage, they talk about how much they like each other, and yeah, they sort of guess that's love. ?!?!?!?

One part of the mystery is solved in a clever way; the other part is solved almost completely in the background and we're only told about it after the fact. We're left wondering why it was even in the book to begin with.

Although this is the fifth book in the series, it almost seems like it was written before the others and before the writers had really worked through some of their character issues. Or maybe they were under pressure to

get this one out. It's just clunky. I sure hope they get it together for the next one.

Lynn says

The Hammett Hex is the fifth book in the Book Collector Series. This series is one of my favorite cozy mystery series and it is one that I pre-order. The reason I like this series is because of the characters and the subject of mystery authors books being searched for by Jordan. In this book, the location changes from Harrison Falls, New York to San Francisco. Tyler (Smiley) Dekker is going to make the trip to San Francisco to meet up with his grandmother who he has been out of touch with for a number of years and because he is a Dashiell Hammett fan. Jordan goes along with him on this trip. At first, Vera Van Alst doesn't want to give her vacation time, but Jordan promises to find a first edition copy of Red Harvest for Vera. Vera has a very fine collection of first editions books and Jordan finds them for her.

Once they arrive in San Francisco, there are many incidents that happen to Jordan. She is in real danger in this book. There is even an abducted Pug. It is a puzzle to both Jordan and Tyler why there are attacks since they are just tourists in San Francisco. Tyler and Jordan meet his grandmother and her grumpy house keeper Zola. I liked last part of the book the best when all the pieces started coming together. I do admit that I missed the location of Harrison Falls in the book. Two of my favorite characters were not featured-Vera and Signora Flammetta Pantone due to the location change. Gram and Zola while interesting characters still did not replace Vera and Signora. I liked the book but it was not my favorite of the series. I like Jordan's cozy bedroom in the turret and her encounters with good cat and bad cat in the Harrison Falls location so I missed that in this book too.

Jeannie and Louis Rigod says

As I sit here ready to write my review of this excellent mystery, I find myself still chuckling. When you get your hands on a novel that keeps your interest and curiosity peaked, while making you laugh (at times out loud,) you have a treasure on your hands...and I did!

Jordan, or Jordie as she is known by family and friends, Bingham has taken a vacation that is long overdue with her boyfriend, (or is he more...) Tyler (Smiley) Dekker to San Francisco, CA. Why that city? Well, it appears that Smiley is a Dashiell Hammett fan. Writer of such hits as "The Maltese Falcon" and "Red Harvest" etc. It soon becomes apparent that the destination has been chosen for another reason...Smiley's Grandmother lives there.

Smiley and his 'Gram' have been estranged for decades and he is truly excited to reconnect. For Jordie, this is amazing. She has always had the 'Kelly's' but knows nothing of the Bingham's and can imagine the thrill Smiley must be enjoying. However for her...this trip has been anything but peaceful and loving...

Our Jordie has been almost run down by a car, thrown off a cable car, hotel room slashed and tossed and....well, believe me the sundae has been thrown at her. What is going on?

Vera Van Alst, Jordie's boss had also instructed and paid for a first-edition of Hammett's 'Red Harvest, and soon after Jordie makes a payment on a copy, she learns the book seller has been murdered. Are the attacks and the murder connected?

Then, what is Jordie to make of Smiley introducing her to his beloved Gram as his Fiancée? In fact the scenes in the Victorian home of Gram are among some of the funniest moments in the book.

This book was highly entertaining and each volume is better and better. To date, in my opinion, this is the best yet. I will keep my eyes peeled for the next installment. By the Way...Uncle Kev? He's a treasure!

Pamela James says

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Mystery Series

Jordan Bingham is on her first vacation in years. She had to promise her employer "Vera Van Alst" that she would purchase Dashiell Hammett's "Red Harvest" a hard to find mystery book that Hammett wrote. The reason for this getaway is that Smiley Dekker is a huge Sam Spade Fan and he wants to soak up all thing Sam Spade, which of course is another Dashiell Hammett reason to be there. The first things to happen seemed like a few coincidences but then the deeds become deadlier, soon there are much more concerns to worry about than books. Smiley also reveals a secret reason for his visit. He has a grandmother he hasn't seen since he was a boy and she has summoned him to her mansion. The next things to happen to everyone reveal a sinister nature of killers, characters and people who are not what they seem and several close calls on many lives. one of which is an adorable pug who is kidnapped. Here are a few highlights, a bookstore that disappears, a trashed hotel room, bugged restaurants, a few questionable police officers, a neighbor or two that love adventure. I won't say much about the jar of marbles, the photographs, and relatives on both sides. If this doesn't pique your interest all the puzzles will or maybe the recipes in the books will be just the ticket to purchase this don't miss a word mystery.

Andree says

Well, this was considerably better than the last one in the series. Far less irritating. Jordan is also less insane in what she does sleuth-wise in this one. Nice to know that Officer Smiley was responsible for some of the mortal peril in this one, not all, but some.

Thing is, the world is fun. The characters are enjoyable (really enjoy Smiley's grandmother). I enjoy these books, in a not-hugely-invested-but-a-fun-light-read kind of a way, but I have to say, or two people who went on a romantic week-long vacation together, Jordan and Smiley didn't spent all that much quality time together. Not on page at least. We're briefly told about a day of sightseeing, but there haven't been that many non-case-related conversations, I feel.

Bottom line, I'm perfectly fine with the relationship, but five books in I have no strong investment because of this trend. (view spoiler)

Also, if a random Kelly uncle needs to show up, must it always be Kev? He is by far the most annoying. Generally okay in small doses (which is how we get him in this book), but still.

Linda Smatzny says

This time the book is set in San Francisco and is a mystery about Tyler "Smiley" Dekker as he and Jordan Bingham have gone to city by the bay for a vacation. However their time in the city is fraught with dangers with seem to center about Jordan she can't figure out a reason. There is a happy reunion for Tyler with his grandmother. The book ends on a very happy party for Jordan and Tyler. The book was an easy quick read.

Nicole says

I really adore Jordan Kelly, and loved her latest adventure - The Hammett Hex by author Victoria Abbott. Jordan and Smiley are in San Francisco for a week's vacation, during which Vera Van Alst needs Jordan to track down a first edition of a Dashiell Hammett book. Of course Jordan and Tyler can't have a relaxing vacation - someone ransacks their hotel rooms and attacks them more than once, there's a home invasion at Smiley's long-lost grandmother's house (and her dog Asta keeps disappearing!!!), a murdered shop keeper, an angry and overprotective Russian caretaker, and there may or may not be greedy relatives crawling out of the woodwork. Lots of references to Nick and Nora Charles, which I loved, Sam Spade and the golden age of San Francisco. Highly recommend this book, and all the books in this series!

Tina at A COZY GIRL READS AND WRITES Blog says

Book Review/Giveaway Oct 16

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Disappearing book shops, murdered owners, break and entering of a senior's home and hotel rampages in the heart of San Francisco are what awaited me when I read The Hemmett Hex. Jordan Bingham has a couchey job working for Vera Van Alst acquiring and purchasing rare mystery novels, currently she wants Jordan to fetch Dashiell Hammett's "Red Harvest" which is a first edition.

Hammett happens to have roots in San Francisco and Jordan, to the disdain of Vera, who reminds me of Cruella De Vil of 101 Dalmatians fame lets her go for a much needed romantic getaway with her boyfriend with cop with ambitions to be a detective, Tyler "Smiley" Dekker.

Jordan starts finding herself in "accidents" all most being run down, their hotel room was ransacked and possible danger lurks for Tyler's long lost "Gram" after he is reunited with her. Farley Tso who owns a bookshop sells Jordan A first edition copy of "Red Harvest" for Vera and soon vanishes and turns up murdered.

Jordan has gone legit in a family of criminals but finds she might have to bend the rules to save the day.

The Hammett Hex was not what I was expecting, unlike the first books in this series, this one didn't revolve around acquiring Vera's precious rare mystery books that was kind of on the back burner which was a disappointment to me. The pace started out slow but was then steady to the end.

“Gram” was a feisty new character that is very loveable and kept me turning the pages. Jordan's take charge and fiery attitude are back in full form. I can't wait to read and review the next book in the series.

Ed says

#5 in the Book Collector mysteries. A fun cozy featuring book acquirer Jordan Bingham in search of an autographed first edition of Dashiell Hammett's Red Harvest for her eccentric employer. She travels to San Francisco with her beau "Smiley", a Hammett fan. As Jordan thinks of shopping and sightseeing, "Smiley" has a hidden agenda to meet with his estranged grandmother. The grandmother story arc overshadows the book hunt but the book is enjoyable and populated with 'red herrings' and plot twists.

Book Collector mystery - Jordan Bingham has been able to swing a romantic trip to San Francisco with Officer Tyler "Smiley" Dekker on the condition that she return with a rare copy of Dashiell Hammett's Red Harvest for her irascible employer, Vera Van Alst. Smiley is a Dashiell devotee himself-excited to be in the city of Hammett's hard-boiled heroes and also announces he plans to visit his estranged grandmother. Jordan is pushed from a cable car and barely escapes death, and when a dark sedan tries to run the couple down, it's clear someone's after them.

Jeanie says

I loved it! This tale takes place in San Francisco rather than where Jordan and Smiley live in New York. They are on a rare vacation from their absorbing positions. There is a reason for this location - other than San Francisco being the city of Sam Spade, Dashiell Hammett's fictional detective. Smiley's family had been fractured when his parents cut off contact with him due to his profession as a police detective, after they had cut off communication with his paternal grandmother years earlier when she remarried after the passing of her first husband. Gram had sent cards to him over the years when he was an adult; she always seemed to find his address even though he had not contacted her. It was time, however, for that to end; she wants to see him and he wants to get reacquainted with the grandmother he barely remembered. And she lives in San Francisco.

Trouble seems to follow wherever Jordan goes, and San Francisco is no exception. She is getting to know Gram even as Smiley is getting to know her as an adult, and trouble seems to be everywhere - on the sidewalk, in the hotel, at the restaurant and even at Gram's. Far away from home as they are, they have to pool their knowledge and wisdom and detecting work to discover who is causing the trouble before anyone, especially Gram, is hurt.

The plot has many layers and is executed with every last loose end tied up. There are enough twists and turns to rival the number of hills in San Francisco, and at times it seems that they have been hexed by the great Hammett himself. Each twist and turn seems to point to other suspects. I like not having all the answers when I read a mystery, so I am, of course, happy to have only part of an answer, not all of them! This tale

will definitely challenge the fans of Victoria Abbott and Dashiell Hammett!

Kay McCloud says

I was so looking forward to this book and had saved it for a stormy day but was seriously disappointed. It reads like a first draft before any editing is done-connections aren't made and characters don't react to situations or each other in a logical story building way. When Jordan makes a deal for a first edition and hands over half the purchase price in advance she has only a slight reaction to the news of the book seller's death. Nothing is said about the potential loss of the book ,the money or her boss's reaction to the whole deal. Yes, eventually we get back to the book seller but by then the momentum is lost and the whole story is flat and just confusing. Sad.

Sue Em says

The Hammett Hex is #5 in the book collector series and just as fun as the first four. Jordan and Smiley head to San Francisco for vacation, and the misadventures follow them. Interesting characters. Love this series!

Ross says

Being a fan of Hammett and a fan of books that incorporate significant figures in their works (for example, The Poe Shadow by Matthew Pearl), I was intrigued by the title. Sadly, the title is the only intriguing piece of the book.

Granted I have not read the previous books, however, after reading this, I will probably avoid this author forever.

1) Hammett was a hard-boiled novelist, if you were to write a mystery about Hammett, wouldn't you want to project that kind of atmosphere? Victoria Abbott failed to do so. San Francisco is such an iconic city, and Jordan is chasing an iconic figure and book, any attempt at playing with the hard-boiled atmosphere fell short.

2) None of the characters were remotely interesting. Vera sounds like an evil grandmother that no one likes and locked herself up in a castle and has a ton of money. So, she sends Jordan on a ridiculous task of finding a 1st Edition of Red Harvest for the sum of I think around 1500 dollars. I don't think Abbott did any research, most 1st editions by Hammett are in the hundred of thousands. Makes me think if Abbott did any kind of research at all. Also, since Red Harvest was the main focus of the novel, there were more references to The Maltese Falcon.

3) Jordan constantly got on my nerves, I couldn't tell if I was reading a 20 year old, or a 13 year old's thoughts. Whether it was about Smiley or thinking of herself in her situation. Smiley was a wet blanket as well. Quite frankly , I would not have been sad if it was Smiley who was pushed out of the San Francisco trolley, haha. But seriously, he just as annoying as the other characters.

4) The writing was awful. It felt as though I was reading a creative writing assignment for high school. Everything was dull, especially the dialogue. It was a B rated soap opera.

Overall, highly disappointed and extremely confused how this got 4 and 5 stars on here.

K.A. Davis says

I have been a fan of the mother-daughter writing team, Victoria Abbott, for quite some time. I was thrilled when I heard that not only were they coming out with a new book in their Book Collector Mystery series, but it was going to be set in San Francisco! I just love that city and spent some time there when I lived up in the wine country for a couple of years. Victoria Abbott expertly captures the flavor and feel of San Francisco while delivering their best story yet with THE HAMMETT HEX.

The story pulled me in from the very start and I became so engrossed in the book that I forgot to take notes for my review! The plot has lots of exciting twists and turns that had me turning pages late into the night. I love the characters surrounding Jordan in Harrison Falls but the new addition of Smiley's grandmother and her helper in San Francisco adds a whole new dimension to the series. Smiley's Gram has a spunkiness and zest for life that compliments Jordan's adventurous spirit. I also enjoyed "The Kelly Rules" that started each chapter, shared by Jordan's uncles. It gives some insight in to how Jordan was raised and her outlook on life, while providing a bit of humor.

Victoria Abbott also shares several recipes, all of them sound oh so yummy! I made the Chocolate Chip Meringue Kisses which are naturally gluten-free. These delicately delicious cookies had me nibbling the delectable treats often over several days...and they stayed just as fresh as the first day I made them. I received a copy in exchange for my honest review. All thoughts and opinions are my own.
