



We Were Kings

Thomas O'Malley , Douglas Graham Purdy

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In 1950's Boston, the Irish Republican Army is running guns and killing witnesses. Cal and Dante are committed to stopping them.

When a body is discovered at the Charlestown locks--tarred, feathered and shot to death--it appears to be a gangland killing, and is almost immediately dismissed. However, Cal O'Brien's cousin, Boston PD detective Owen Lackey, recognizes the murder style as the typical retribution for IRA informers. Combined with a tip-off about a boat coming into Boston weighed down with stolen guns and ammunition, the body in the locks hints that much more may be at stake than a one-off hit.

Serpents in the Cold introduced us to Cal and Dante, whose previous investigation brought them to the highest ranks of Boston's political elite. This time, Cal and Dante descend into the city's shadowy underbelly--a world of packed dance halls, Irish wakes, and funeral parlors. There they discover a terrorist plot that will shake the city to its core and bring them head-to-head not only with Cal's past, but with the IRA Army Council itself.

We Were Kings Details

Date : Published June 21st 2016 by Mulholland Books

ISBN : 9780316323536

Author : Thomas O'Malley , Douglas Graham Purdy

Format : Hardcover 384 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Mystery, Fiction, European Literature, Irish Literature, Thriller

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From Reader Review We Were Kings for online ebook

Samuel Peterson says

Drenched in sweat and blood, We Were Kings is a really solid sophomore effort from O'Malley & Purdy. The introduction of Bobby Myles is one of the most beautiful and gut-wrenching chapters I've ever read, and it sets a gritty tone for the unapologetically cruel ride to come. Excellent work, lads! Hope to see more from you soon.

Tabby Shiflett says

A dark historical crime novel. It took a while for the story and characters to develop for me (I was a little lost at the beginning, so I recommend reading the first book that I did not) and the violence was not really my cup of tea, but it's a Boston/Irish Mob book. I did enjoy the historical side. For noir fans and those who like crime dramas.

GoodReads FirstReads Giveaway

Giovonna says

This book was great! I loved the language, the grit, realism. This would be like if Law & Order was shot in Boston in the 1950's. I picked this book up at the library just being remotely interested in it. Now I am attached to the detectives! I highly recommend this book for someone looking for a great historical mystery. The authors did their homework. I feel they grew up in Boston or had family that did. A gripping read! Fished the rest in one night!

Elina says

Maybe I would have liked this more if I had read the first in the series but 50 pages in I was still not into it and forcing myself so I gave up. I was really excited about the Boston setting but it was not enough to keep me interested in the characters.

Dianne Hurley says

The novel takes place in Boston in the 1950's. It involved Irish IRA and mob deals, primarily gun running. Lots of violence and murder, including a main character 2/3 into the book. I enjoyed the read.

Paul says

We Were Kings is another great read from Thomas O'Malley and Douglas Graham Purdy. Having enjoyed their first book, Serpents In The Cold, I was very curious what direction they would take with this one. The first book portrayed a Boston that was so monumentally grim and frightening (as well as fascinating), I was somewhat relieved to find this one eased up a little bit and even threw in some occasional humor, like the loudmouth drunk at Fenway Park in chapter 19 (VERY funny!) But make no mistake, this novel still has plenty of brutal murders and mayhem and ugly, twisted characters. And as with the first book, what I liked the most in We Were Kings were the very credible descriptions and use of the Boston setting. The authors obviously know the city well and have imagined life there in the 1950's quite accurately, from what I could tell. As a former long-time resident of the city myself, I felt at times as if I was back walking the streets myself, this time with Dante and Cal in the earlier decade of the 50's. For example, when Dante took little Maria and walked from the North End over to a diner on the other side of Boston Garden to look for Claudia, the details of the streets and it's people seemed very much like the city I knew, despite some changes made since then. Chapter 10 includes a wonderfully sad description of the cheap boardinghouse Cal is living in in the Fort Point Channel, and of the resignation and despair of the other residents, which include junkies, drunks and all manner of low-level criminals. The South Boston Aquarium was also a fascinatingly bleak place in it's final days, from the description provided.

I think most readers will find the tale of Boston's grim underworld in We Were Kings to be well worth their time.

Finally, just one piece of advice for Dante-next time Claudia or anyone else you know arrive at your doorstep seriously hurt from an assault, take them to get them medical help BEFORE you take off to seek revenge on the perpetrator!

Marg Corjay says

Graphically violent story of Boston in the sixties.

Joseph says

Gritty Boston tale.

Sarah Sherrin says

This book was absolutely fantastic! I won this in a Goodreads giveaway and I'm very happy that I did! It was a wonderful noir thriller with imperfect people taking on the Irish and Boston and their own life and failings. I absolutely loved the characters and how nicely the story flowed and fell together. Like many descriptive authors, this books does tend to get over descriptive but not so much to where I would have ended up skimming. I highly recommend this book!

mamalovestoread says

This book isn't the usual genre that I choose to read but I gave this a go to broaden my perspective a little and take a break from my typical horror read. The first thing I instantly liked about the book was the depth of character development. While this may feel like a slow burn I certainly felt like it gave me a chance to connect with the characters which is what I need to keep me interested in a book all the way to the end. While the book was well written in an easy to read, easy to follow way, the one distraction I found was where there were phrases in Irish. In some cases, the meaning wasn't especially evident and I found myself wandering off to google to find out the translation. I have some limited Irish language in my head from school but not enough to help me out here. That said, it's a small negative.

The story itself is thrilling and engaging in parts and while it isn't the best book I've ever read on the shadowy underground of 1950's Irish-American IRA enclaves it had enough tension to keep me wanting to read on. It's a good read if you want to try something new.

Joan Mitchell says

This is a dark book about Irish American mobs after WWII. Men who are still involved with IRA, men who are trying to be Americans and men who love their families and are both bad and good. Three friends, one cop, one a has been cop and their friend are trying to find out who tarred and feathered one of their own and where the missing guns that started it all have gone. These men have strong loyalties to each other and their circle of friends but want to stop the killings in their Irish American community. I recommend this book to readers who like mob warfare, friends sticking together and the underside of life. I received this book from Goodreads for free.

Erin says

note - the author provided me with a copy for review

i liked this book quite a bit more than its predecessor, *serpents in the cold*. this time we are in sweltering miserable boston as opposed to freezing to death boston. boston: it's basically never nice here! this is a true thing.

the prose is better, the city a bigger and better presence in the plot, but my complaint about the female characters still stands. dante, you are a douche of massive proportions.

the final battle scene in the huge summer rainstorm is pretty amazing

props for setting up a third book

Dave says

Vengeance, IRA plots, and flawed characters in '50's Boston. I liked it a lot, but also found it difficult to

understand the characters without having read the 1st book. Once beyond that I found the characters, plotting and mood very reminiscent of the early hard-boiled Pelecanos books set in Washington DC.

Skip says

[of how missing guns were going to

Paula Ackley says

We Were Kings is well written with a very descriptive account of Boston and its criminal element in the 1950's. I found it to have too many characters and it was hard for me to keep track of them especially in the beginning. They were all important to the story and they all fit into it but I still found myself flipping back pages to find out who the character was and how he/she fit into the storyline. Things would probably have been easier if I had read more of the book in each sitting but for some reason I just couldn't read more than a few chapters at a time.
