



The King of Methlehem: A Novel

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From a widely acclaimed author and prominent prosecutor, an electrifying novel that deftly penetrates America's latest and fastest-growing drug epidemic Detective Wyatt James is a veteran police officer with the Meth Lab team in Pierce County, Washington -- an epicenter of methamphetamine production. At the core of the local meth problem is the elusive, self-proclaimed "King of Meth-lehem." The king moves from one shelter to another, relying on the kindness and desperation of a variety of women. He's the top meth cook in the region, a dangerously successful identity thief, and he travels under a number of famous aliases, among them Lars Ulrich, Peter Farrelly, Ted Nugent, and most recently Howard Schultz.

Wyatt has been chasing Howard relentlessly, but the pursuit has become a fixation that threatens to destroy Wyatt's personal life and disrupt the lives of his bookish girlfriend, Suki, who just moved into his loft, and his best friend, Mike, a prosecutor -- and perhaps involve them all in a dangerously volatile situation. Neither Suki nor Mike nor Wyatt's supervisor seems able to deter him from his obsessive hunt.

Though Wyatt is closing in on him, Howard is on the verge of a breakthrough as he transforms his small-time "guerrilla" cooking into a large-scale meth lab. As he becomes more ambitious, plotting to stay one move ahead of Wyatt and rival dealers, he descends to fascinating levels of addiction, paranoia, egoism, and madness. His newfound success forces him to take greater risks, and his list of enemies becomes more extensive and more dangerous. The king will not go down without a fight.

With startling precision and compelling prose, the author of "Never Mind Nirvana" once again brings his insight and wit to a topical slice of our popular culture. Lindquist takes us deep into the heart of what has become America's most dangerous drug epidemic, exposing the complex and horrifying lengths to which addicts -- tweakers -- will go for their meth, as well as the extraordinary challenges that society faces in eradicating a nationwide plague.

The King of Methlehem: A Novel Details

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From Reader Review The King of Methlehem: A Novel for online ebook

Beth says

Hooray for Pierce County- what a distinction! The King of Meth! Scary and interesting. Maybe I will rethink how I dispose of my credit card receipts...

Scott says

I am enjoying this book but the name-dropping and constant references to the "IT" places and musicians surrounding TTown gets annoying in a "name-dropping" kind of way. It becomes so over-powering that you lose the book's content in places to count the name droppings.

However, I did learn some tidbits about the Pierce County judicial inner-workings and there are some memorable quotes that make you savvy in questioning whether or not anyone around you could be a tweeker (i.e. "Dialogue with a tweeker is roughly akin to one with a snotty ten-year-old."

Gretzky B says

I haven't read any of Mark Lindquist's novels, but I just put his others on hold at the library - He's funny, dark, full of pop cultural references, and the novel's set in Pierce County, mostly Tacoma but also rural.

The book follows a police detective chasing a guy who's using Howard Schulz as an alias while making lots of meth.

Lindquist is an attorney in the Pierce County Prosecutor's office, which is why I picked the book up initially. Also because the Seattle Times gave it a good review. Anyway, it's worth reading.

He's sort of in that pack of authors that includes Bret Easton Ellis, Tama Janowitz, and Jay McInerney, if that helps with context at all.

Anna says

Massively disappointing. I was so looking forward to this book and it was just a stone cold let down from start to finish. By the first few chapters I was wincing with vicarious embarrassment over the main character, who not only stashed his weed in a hollowed out copy of Herman Melville, but then smoked up while reading Camus and then - in case we weren't really sure how achingly cool he was - turned out to be dating a

twenty-five year old half Swedish, half Japanese stripper. And he's forty. I get that there's an element of wish fulfillment in fiction, but come on. This is just shameful.

Then again, it might not just be the outpourings of an unchecked id, because most of the characters seem like they'd be frankly painful to be around for more than five minutes. While the 'king' himself is appropriately horrible the good guys are a couple of puddle-deep gen Xers who - in lieu of conversation - seem to spend the whole time quoting song lyrics or lines from movies in much the same dead-eyed, laundry list tone as Patrick Bateman might list labels. There's a real braggart tone to the endless cultural namedropping; even Mike's date has her bookshelf inventoried in case we were of the impression that one of our high minded heroes might read something other than fine literature.

Initially I picked up this book because I was interested to read about drugs from the perspective of someone who worked in law enforcement, and while there are some passages that are almost interesting, they usually get drowned out by the main characters quoting Nirvana lyrics at each other. Then occasionally Mike will say something like "You should marry Suki because she's really cool," completely out of left field and presumably because the plot demands it.

And then there's the plot. It's sleepy and disjointed and the penultimate section is a bait and switch almost as embarrassing as Wyatt's Melville themed stash box. While Howard does passable service as the great white meth whale, Wyatt makes a languid, preening Ahab, whose main ruminations center around his hollow relationship with Suki.

I did enjoy the sections about Howard's victims - Brandy, Porsche and Joe - but those few parts that landed, when I found myself desperately worried about the fate of the children in the hands of a massively unstable methhead, only served to underscore just how little I cared about Mike and Wyatt.

Daniel says

I should start by saying that the City of Tacoma and Pierce County ought to do everything in their power _not_ to publicize this book. Sure, it's written by a deputy county prosecutor (one of their own, if you will), but I'm not sure Pierce County needs any more sources touting its status as the meth capital of the western United States.

Onto the book itself. Even though my rating was is, I found it oddly riveting. The story was sort of a mediocre detective novel, with character development that felt incomplete and left me wanting more.

I decided to pick up the book in the first place because I had heard that it referenced real Tacoma places. Such references were indeed all over the place, but they felt more like forced references than natural ones. Referring to Tacoma landmarks, entities, etc., did little to change the plot - they could just have easily have been Seattle landmarks, or Kansas City landmarks, or totally made up landmarks.

So why was I riveted? Probably because I'm a sucker for books and movies set in places that I'm familiar with. Even though I recognize that the references to Tacoma landmarks didn't do much for the story, I loved them.

I doubt somebody that's not from Tacoma would be interested.

Badly Drawn Girl says

This book was a huge disappointment. I expected much more from a book that takes place in my local area and addresses the meth problem. There are many problems with the story. For starters, Mark Lindquist is constantly name dropping bands in a way that suggests a insecure hipster trying to get noticed at a party. It doesn't add to the plot and every time it happened it took me out of the story. Okay Mark, you have good taste in music... can we move on now?

The two main characters enjoy trading movie lines back and forth. Another attempt by the author to seem young and hip. It was so obvious that it was painful to read. There wasn't an honest conversation in the whole book.

The story is barely fleshed out. None of the characters truly come to life, they are thinly sketched stereotypes. I didn't care about any of them. When the story ends we are left with more questions than answers.

Mark Lindquist came up with a clever title, and he could have written an engaging and edgy book. He knows the area well, he obviously did a lot of research on meth, so why did he publish a book that reads like a first draft?

Scott says

By PC Prosecuting Attorney Mark Lindquist. Set in Pierce County. A gritty, realistic and based on real life people and events. Novel about the war against Meth Amphetamines in Pierce County, WA. Excellent book, but also especially interesting to me as I live in Pierce County and work for Pierce County and am immediately familiar with most of the places referenced in the book.

Mary Whisner says

Some lawyers fantasize about becoming novelists. Mark Lindquist was a successful screenwriter and novelist who became a lawyer. He is now a prosecutor in Pierce County. He didn't leave behind his writing, though, and now has a new novel, The King of Methlehem, that is informed by his experience as a prosecutor. Years before Breaking Bad it showed the seamy, ugly life of a small-time meth manufacturer.

Mary MacKintosh says

It took me 3 years to finally get to this book. I wanted to read it because it was set in Tacoma, because it was about meth labs, which are now not the scourge that they were when the book was published. It's a great read. The character that is the most interesting is Howard the meth cook that is the 'white whale of detective Wyatt James--the main character's-- life. I don't know how the author got inside the skin of a creepy, drugged

out gutter crawler as well as he did. Actually, I thought all the other characters were sort of stock, but the book pulls the reader through the romance, the romantic tiffs, and all the gotta haves of standard fiction to track the antics of the over the edge Howard.

Jessica says

A fast read about a detective in Pierce County, Washington and his pursuit to find a meth manufacturer. A sad look at the world of meth users and makers, and those that devote their lives to stopping them. I sometimes had to remind myself it was a work of fiction, because the story seemed so real. Probably because I live in Washington and know the toll the meth craze has taken on this state, and as a social worker, I've gotten to know meth users, and have been in their homes. Definitely not an uplifting book, but entertaining and informative. Both a happy and sad ending to the story...both surprises to me.

susan says

this book was a fast read- very entertaining and interesting because of the nature of it's subject. Written by a Pierce County attorney who works with the drug unit. I heard him on NPR which prompted me to buy the book. It's a detective story about a cop trying to nail a major cook in meth production. Although the story was fun, it lacked real depth- which is what I craved because the story was so interesting.

Steve says

Lindquist takes us into the heart of what has become America's most dangerous drug epidemic, meth addiction, based on his experience as a prosecutor in Pierce County Washington the Meth Capitol of the US. Three character's stories intertwine: Howard Schultz, (aka Lars Ulrich, Ted Nugent, Peter Farrelly) identity thief and the self proclaimed "King of Methlehem", Detective Wyatt James obsessed with nailing Howard, and Wyatt's friend Mike a Prosecutor who is trying to keep Wyatt from allowing his obsession to destroy him. A horrifying look at the paranoia, egotism, and madness of meth addiction and the frustrations of combating it.

Francine says

The author has a frightening insight into the world of tweakers that made my skin crawl but the padding is pretty much your typical first-timer's attempt at a detective novel (though I don't know if it's actually his first time). The PNW references are a nice touch to those who live up here, but might come off as an overdose to those who aren't familiar with the area. There was no excitement in the whole "chase" part of this book and the main character is (yawn) a typical PNW dude so I have to give this a poor-to-fair rating. He had the oooky speed-dealer details down nicely but didn't weave a good story from it.

Carolyn says

I was shocked at how much I disliked this book. The third person-present tense was awkward. But worse was the tedious, school-paper choppy-ness that came across like a bad imitation of Hemingway. Too much jargon and Tacoma travel guide. It seemed weirdly compulsive for the author to mention numerous local businesses and landmarks. I was left wondering why anyone outside of Pierce County Washington would have the slightest interest in reading this. You can tell the author is a prosecutor as the only people with any value in the world appear to be prosecutors, cops, court staff and crime victims. Everyone else is a waste. I guess the legal concept of "prosecutorial misconduct" developed by accident and that prosecutors never ever ever ever ever play legal games. Heh.

As a side note, the book included a scathing denunciation of a case which reversed the convictions of numerous defendants. In the book you'd think it was nothing more than crazy judges making life hard for virtuous prosecutors. The author conveniently leaves out the fact that the convictions were overturned because the author's own office had misused the law to increase sentences.

Overall the prominent Mary Sue-ism and pontificating detract from an okay, inside-scoop story of tracking drug manufacturers. There are better (and better-written) accounts elsewhere.

John Marr says

An novel about a cops & addicts by a former B-list brat packer that's really just another genre novel where cops are good and tweakers are animals. Extra star awarded for the midget informants's explanation for why he hates jail: "They use me for midget tossing contests."
