



Cooks, Crooks and Colt: This Investigator Serves Up Results

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Five years ago, Harmon Colt, was a Los Angeles executive chef on the fast track to super-stardom. But a life changing incident made him never want to step in to the kitchen again. Now, Colt is a private investigator specializing in investigations for the food and hospitality industry. When restaurateur Paul Falsetti asks Colt to look in to the disappearance of his hostess and head waitress Zoe Hamilton, it looks like an easy way for Colt to make some easy money. But it soon becomes clear to Colt that he is not the only one looking for Zoe. The Feds want to find her and along with a Jamaican gang from New Jersey. As Colt uses his restaurant connections to locate her, he is starting to realize that nothing is as it seems and the only person who knows the truth of what is really going on is Zoe, herself. To make matters worse, Colt's past resurfaces, and he is forced to deal with demons he thought were long ago buried. But Colt has made a pledge to find Zoe and free her of her pursuers. But as he searches for her he knows that this is a game where the players play for keeps, and if he loses this game, he will not be around to play again...

Cooks, Crooks and Colt: This Investigator Serves Up Results Details

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Dale Workman says

I received this book through Goodreads' First Reads Giveaway.

I would rate this book as an OK and I did like it. The writing was a bit hollow and I would have preferred if the writer had given every thing more depth so I took off one star for that. I deducted another star simply because I can't say that I REALLY liked it. I will say that it did hold my interest and I did not have to FORCE myself to read it through to the end. The beginning of the book did grab my attention enough to make me want to finish it.

Brian Verendus says

In the interest of full disclosure, I received this book for free courtesy of Goodreads First Reads. With that said, I was excited to read this book and it was the first book I'd ever won on Goodreads.

The package included a Harmon Colt keychain flashlight and a business card for the main character alongside a signed copy of the book. Very cool. This is one of the reasons I couldn't give Mr. Neal less than three stars. What can I say? I like the passion from a new author trying to make his way.

As far as the actual book was concerned, I ended up being slightly disappointed. It's not that the story idea was bad, or the main character uninspired. My main problem was the fact that the work appears, on the whole, to be entirely unedited or proofread. I don't want to be too harsh here, but there were grammar, usage, and punctuation errors on almost every page. This had the effect of making me re-read sentences and, occasionally, entire paragraphs to discern what the author was trying to say.

I understand that it is difficult to write a novel, and I appreciate the effort that Mr. Neal took in crafting this one. I think the idea of a former chef becoming a private eye is a new spin on the detective genre and entirely worth writing. The main character is a sympathetic and good-hearted guy that you really want to root for. I also enjoyed his occasional asides into the world of culinary arts. Clearly the author has experience in the kitchen and his food descriptions and insights into the restaurant world are both humorous and accurate.

The other characters in the book (Groovy, Larson, TJ, etc.) were likable and fit well with the main character. I would have liked to have seen a little more complexity, but I think Mr. Neal laid a good foundation for future stories with this crew.

The plot moved along quickly and was easy to follow (grammar and punctuation aside). The only issue I had with the story came near the end when a mystery man (Mr. Coyote) stepped in to save the day. This character was not fleshed out very well earlier in the book and ended up saving Harmon's bacon. Also, as someone who works in the legal field, I would have liked to have seen a little more research into the way criminal cases are actually handled. This aspect of the story was glossed over and left me feeling a little underwhelmed.

If I were rating this book solely on the writing, then I really couldn't justify giving it three stars. However, I

think that any author who puts himself out there is worthy of respect. I appreciate the idea and concept of the story, and while I wasn't always happy with the execution, I can honestly say that I wish him the best of luck going forward.

Natalya says

This is the very first book I have won from Goodreads First Reads giveaway and although this kind of book isn't normally my genre, the idea of a Hollywood chef turned private eye sounded just quirky enough for me to find intriguing.

The signed copy came with a flash light key ring and a business card belonging to the main character, which was a nice touch.

As I started to read it however, I realised there were A LOT of grammar and punctuation mistakes. And although you come across them in books all the time, these are really quite shocking and distracting. Using 'to' instead of 'too' repeatedly and spelling 'rough' as 'ruff' or 'except' as 'accept', just to name a few, gives the impression that the author wrote the book without any kind of proof reading or editing. If you can get past the cringe worthy errors and the somewhat repetitive phrasing, the storyline isn't bad however the book would benefit from being a little longer for the sake of character development.

Having said that, I personally find longer books somewhat daunting, unless it's a particularly good read, and I found the 210 page length of this book just right for my liking with the simple language making it easy to read in a day.

As a starting idea, this story has all the elements to make it successful, with just the right amount of comedy, mystery and crime. Now these elements just need to be improved on, polished and refined a little.

I sincerely wish the best of luck to Kem Roy Neal in his writing endeavour and look forward to reading his next installment in the series.

Robin Rowles says

Harmon Colt, an ex Los Angeles executive chef has a life changing incident that makes up his mind that he never wants to work in another kitchen.

Colt, becomes a private investigator, specializing in investigations for the food and hospitality industry. Restaurateur Paul Falsetti asks Colt to look into the disappearance of his head waitress and hostess Zoe Hamilton. It looked like an easy way to make money! It soon becomes clear to Colt he is not the only one looking for Zoe. The Feds want to find her, as well as a Jamaican gang from New Jersey.

Colt uses his restaurant connections to locate Zoe, but he then realizes that nothing is as it appeared, and the only person who knows the truth of what's really going on is Zoe.

To complicate things more, Colt past resurfaces and he is forced to deal with the demons he thought he had long sorted.

Colt never forgets his pledge to find Zoe and free her from her pursuers. As he searches for her, he soon realizes this is a game where the players play for keeps, and he knows if he loses this game, he will not be around to play anymore!

This is an interesting story that has many ups and downs and some unexpected surprises. If you enjoy investigator stories, you will almost certainly like this work by author Kem Roy Neal.

Wendy says

"Cooks, Crooks and Colt" which I won from Goodreads Giveaways is an intriguing and entertaining story that combines crime and a mystery in the tantalizing world of the food and hospitality industry. It begins when the girlfriend of Harmon Colt, an executive chef at the TXR Bistro is brutalized by her brother. Forever changed by the tragic incident Harmon makes a dramatic career change, handing in his chef's hat for a gun and a PI badge.

After recovering a prized recipe for his client Paul Falsetti the restaurateur gives him a large retainer to find his lover, Zoe Hamilton a hostess and head waitress. What Hamon doesn't expect is to be drawn into a case that involves the Feds, New Jersey drug dealers, corrupt law enforcement officers and to come face to face with his past. Like a chess game every move brings him closer to Zoe and to bringing justice to the criminals that want her dead, but will he survive the clash of wills.

The plot is well-developed blending Zem Roy Neal's experience in security and the culinary arts into a captivating murder-mystery. With proofreading many of the grammar and punctuation errors could have been avoided, but these do not delineate from the creative and inventiveness of a crime story that revolves around a chef turned private investigator. As the drama unfolds and events escalate the tension is moderated by the wit and humor of Hamon's friends who congregate to eat and drink in his renovated restaurant. Yet, the excitement never stops as the car chases increase, bullets fly and the mystery of Zoe's disappearance begins to unravel. I liked the added touches to the story like "Mona Lisa" the vintage car Hamon drives and the stunt vehicle with a rocket in the trunk.

I found the characters were well-developed and complex except for Agent Coyote, a fascinating and determined individual who appeared near the end, but may be more prominent in future stories. Hamon Cole, haunted by a tragic experience is a likeable, astute, clever and ethical private investigator who fears a committed relationship. His friend and partner, Gavin "Groovy" Yeats is quick-tempered, eccentric and intelligent; an executive chef who changed careers after being falsely accused of a crime. Terry (TJ) Jacobs the Times reporter and Hamon's girlfriend is curious, high-spirited and loving. In this story even the antagonists are unforgettable like Carla Cardenas a mentally unstable, cruel and vindictive woman, Jack Beard who masks a vicious streak behind a cool and professional facade, and the callous Jamaican gang of thugs who prey on the young and innocent. All these characters and more add to the energy and strength of a novel that is riveting.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book from an up and coming author and look forward to reading more about Hamon Cole's adventures in the world of crime and the culinary arts. Although I would rate this novel a 3.5 which is not on the scale I will give it a 4.0 and look forward to rating future novels higher.

Zane says

This was, at most, an ok read. It seems to be self-published and the copy that I received free through

Goodreads First Reads did not seem to be an advanced reader copy but a mass market copy. That said, as a former educator, I was quite disappointed by grammar and punctuation errors. Also the book contains quite a few short and choppy sentences. Character development is, to me, obviously based on the author's experiences in security and the culinary arts. All in all, an ok read but the book did not make me desire to wait breathlessly for Mr. Neal's next piece of literary work.

Jennifer-Eve Workman says

Working on review... will update!

John Hausrath says

A very enjoyable thriller. recommended.

Amber says

I received this book as part of a Goodreads First-Reads giveaway in exchange for my honest opinion.

While I loved the characters, the plot and the overall story line, this book had several editing flaws where words were capitalized that should not have been, the spacing was sometimes off, and there were way too many commas. The book would have also flowed better if the author had used contractions throughout. I would love it if a big publishing house would pick up this book and polish it a little, then re-release it as part of a great new series. It had all of the elements I like in a book, some mystery, some comedy, some suspense and great characters. Overall I would recommend this book.

Lily Ordaz says

Simple read, definitely something that can be enjoyed over tea/coffee.

This book is like a daytime movie on television. It's something unheard of and you're not immediately engrossed in the plot, but later you find yourself rushing to the couch before the commercial ends. Something I did enjoy was how there was no set stereotype for the LGBT characters. The sexuality of the characters didn't affect their alignment with good/evil, which was new and refreshing.

Also a plot revolving around an ex-chef working as an investigator? Definitely an interesting combination.

The only issue I had while reading was a handful of grammatical mistakes, but with every new book comes new experience for the Author!

If you enjoy food and investigations, then this is the book for you!

