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Kenneth J. Weber, ?? ????, ?? ??? (Translator)

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Thirty-seven cases of murder and mayhem you can solve in under five minutes!

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Author : Kenneth J. Weber , ?? ??? , ?? ??? (Translator)

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From Reader Review 5?????? for online ebook

SeriouslyJerome says

Brain teasers for the murder mystery set. Only a handful are actually doable unless you have a particular expertise on a certain subject - like, how well do you know your apples, & how they grow? But even without specific knowledge, the reader can pick out the information offered by the author to know it has something to do with the solution.

Eric Wallace says

Picked this up in a consignment store while my Sweetie was trying on potential outfits. I immediately remembered how I loved these kind of books as a kid, and read every one I could get my hands on. And soon I remembered the difficulty of trying to pause at the end of the story to figure it out *before* turning to the solutions in the back, and the alternating frustrations of "How could you expect someone to know that?" and "Dang, I should've caught that easily!"

Each story is well-written in a compact way to introduce you to the relevant characters and situations with ease. Weber does a great job with the "show, don't tell" model of story-telling, and each new character is unique and likable, or at least: not uninteresting. (A note to the American reader: the author is Canadian, so don't be surprised by a few "unusual" words or spellings.)

The challenge of the mysteries is quite varied, ranging from ones that are immediately obvious, to some real head-scratchers that require the reader to have some domain-specific knowledge (including, for example, livestock behavior and mythology). I don't know if this variety is a weakness or a strength. I suppose it would be altogether disappointing if every story was far too challenging to grasp, or no mystery at all--so perhaps the varied challenges keeps the reader entertained.

And, in the end, that's exactly what the book did: it kept me entertained, one story after another, until I reached the end.

Jami Anne says

This book is kickin' my bootie!!! I've only solved about 1/2 of the cases. I just thought I was a careful reader! ;)

Hayley says

These books are fun. They are like short story puzzles. You read a couple pages on some sort of mystery and then you are given a question to answer about it. Sometimes you are expected to know things that I'm pretty sure are not common knowledge, but they are great books for the "armchair detective" (yes I know it is really dorky to use that phrase).

Leew49 says

Each mystery in this book is just a few pages long, designed to be a brain teaser along the lines of Isaac Asimov's Black Widowers or the Encyclopedia Brown stories for children. There is some humor, and the settings and even characters are pretty well done given the length of the pieces. The problem that I encountered was that so many of the solutions required some rather esoteric knowledge on the part of the reader. It was sometimes frustrating to read a story--even a five-minute story--only to discover that the mystery could not be solved without an in-depth knowledge of the history of Saracenic chess boards or the sleeping habits of ruminants.

Kat says

the book i've always wanted!! participation into solving the mysteries...choose a story and solve it!! bad thing is that is difficult to finish it with one read

Mike Shultz says

I love little mystery stories like these. I guess that's why I get so annoyed when some of them are so bad. Out of the "37" (and yes, those quotes are intentional) mysteries in this book, about a dozen of them were good. When I say good, I don't mean that I solved it or that it was really hard or really easy. I mean that the text presented the necessary information, but I had to put some thought to it and figure out the answer. What else is there? You ask. What would make them bad?

Let me count the ways.

First, I couldn't count 3 of the 37 as good because they weren't in the book. Yes, a book that says there are 37 mysteries on the cover contains 34. Granted, this one (and only this one) is the publisher's fault; the book skips from page 96 to 105, cutting off right in the middle of a mystery. Annoying. Hence the "37" mysteries.

Spoilers follow, but these are the kind of spoilers you'll probably want to read.

Then there's the plainly and crassly insipid. One mystery revolves around a woman who claims to have smelled acetylene during a crime, yada yada yada. But--get this (sarcasm alert) slip-up on her part! While the detective is questioning her, he is eating a peanut butter and banana sandwich! And! She asks him **WHAT KIND IT IS!** Dun, dun, dah! Plainly, as any good detective would pick up on, **ANY WOMAN WHO CAN SMELL ACETYLENE WOULD'VE BEEN ABLE TO SMELL PEANUT BUTTER AND BANANA** and wouldn't have needed to ask what kind of sandwich it was! Ha! Criminal caught! Yessir, I'm not joking here! That was the answer printed in the back of the book. Never mind that maybe she was just being polite and asking what he was having for lunch. Never mind that this is a ridiculous extrapolation. Never mind that lots of factors might prevent someone from smelling something in a given situation. Am I bitter because I couldn't solve it myself? Wracked with bitter self-loathing over this revelation that my IQ is far lower than I had hoped and believed?

Ah, no.

Then there's the mystery in which the beekeeper was proved to be a liar. You see, the detective comes because someone heard a gunshot. The beekeeper claims that he was cleaning his shotgun and it went off by accident because a bee flew in his face. Never mind the fact that it would be titanically stupid to clean a gun while its loaded. Never mind that it makes no sense that swatting at a bee would somehow hook his finger into the trigger guard and pull the trigger. No, that's not why the detective knew he was lying. The detective knew because it was NIGHT TIME, and BEES DON'T FLY AT NIGHT, as every beekeeper should know. (And would therefore be titanically stupid to make up such a lie.) That's not the problem in this one. The problem is that I read the answer, then reread the story. Night time? No mention of it being night in the story. Never says it's dark. Not even any mention of the detective using a flashlight as he searched the property. No mention of house lights on. No mention of him asking the beekeeper why the heck he would clean his gun outside in the dark. You see, the story just makes one passing reference to the detective's car's headlights at the beginning of the story. In other words, the "mystery" was not in a set of facts that one had to figure out. The mystery was in HIDING KEY INFORMATION FROM THE READER by the manner in which the text was (unnaturally) written. That's no fun, friends. That's stupid. (And in a later mystery, the author comes right out and admits to it, saying that you can "deduce from the text" that a plane was flying upriver when it would've been obvious to the point-of-view character and should've been incorporated into the text. On that one, I figured it out anyway, but I still didn't like it.

Then there's the one that revolves around the "fact" (yes, I'm using quotes correctly again) that the salt water in the Dead Sea is SIX TIMES DENSER THAN NORMAL WATER. Huh? You mean, almost as dense as iron? Ah, yes, THAT would explain why the scientist on the boat was lying about being a scientist. He should've KNOWN that he would break his neck from diving into the iron-like waters of the dead sea. (I think the author confused "six times more salt than sea water" with "six times denser than water", but that's just a guess. You know, the difference between 1.24 and 6.0 -- that tricksy science stuff! It's too hard to get your facts straight on stuff like that! But it sure is a good idea to build an entire mystery around it.

There's more, but if I haven't made my point by now, I'm not going to.

The sad thing is, I enjoyed the book for those 12 good ones. But I sure wish I could find a book of these things in which at least half of them were good!

** And now, after posting this, I glanced over some other readers' reviews. I feel bad for the people who said that some of them were just so hard... apparently not realizing that it wasn't their fault!

C.O. Bonham says

So Frustrating. Read each story twice. Give up. Look at the answers. And then find out that it was the most obvious solution. Sometimes.

Some of the mysteries do take a bit of math, others you need to know a snippet of trivia and other will make you feel as dumb as dirt.

But still have to say that this is some really good writing. The author actually takes the time to flesh out his characters and describe his settings. He leaves you feeling like you have read the beginning of really good mystery novel after only three pages. to bad he doesn't continue any one plot or even have reoccurring

characters. I would seriously like to read a full length detective novel from this author.

L.a. Hernandez says

Was a fun read and very interesting. I can't wait to get the new one to take with me on my trip.

Allie says

like other reviewers stated, this book lacked a lot. many of the mysteries require specific knowledge to solve, which made them difficult and frustrating. I'll pass on reading the rest of the books in this series.

Glenn says

My only critique is that for many of these, the reader would need to know some insights particular to a specific subject area in order to solve the mystery.

Kari says

Like Encyclopedia Brown, for grown-ups. Kinda fun.

Wendy says

From the back cover: "Every five minutes, another crime is committed. Can you trap a murderer, catch a thief, expose a blackmailer, spot a deception?" The answer is no, you cannot. Why? Because most of these stories require specialized knowledge most people don't have. If you are privy to proper flag flying etiquette or understand that living near a swamp means warm weather brings swarms of mosquitoes, you might be able to solve a few of these. However, you will still be left wondering how figuring out the deceptive characters connects with the storyline. They don't. Motives are never explained. My favorite is about a woman who goes to a farm in order to insure a racehorse. She finds the owner lounging around in the back orchard where he is eating apples off the ground. He explains that he grew up in orchards. Spoiler: He is deceptive because anyone who has grown up in an orchard knows you don't eat apples that have fallen to the ground. They are diseased. Okay...so what?? Pass this one up.

Scott says

Fun critical thinking builder!

Pat Tucker says

37 short cases are presented and than at the end of the book are the solutions. I could not figure out very many!
