



King City

Lee Goldberg

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Major Crimes Unit detective Tom Wade secretly worked with the Feds to nail seven of his fellow cops for corruption...turning him into a pariah in the police department. So he's exiled to patrol a beat in King City's deadliest neighborhood... with no back-up, no resources, and no hope of survival.

Now Wade fights to tame the lawless, poverty-stricken wasteland...while investigating a string of brutal murders of young women. It's a case that takes him from the squalor of the inner-city to the manicured enclaves of the privileged, revealing the sordid and deadly ways the two worlds are intertwined...making his enemies even more determined to crush him.

But for Tom Wade, backing down is never an option...even if it will cost him his life. It's one reason why bestselling author Janet Evanovich calls Wade "an unforgettable and deeply compelling character in the most original crime novel to come along in years."

King City Details

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From Reader Review King City for online ebook

Randy says

Tom Wade had committed an unpardonable sin. He'd worked with Federal authorities to expose corruption in the King City police force. It made him a pariah and, if the chief could have worked it without repercussions, it would have gotten him fired. As it was, it got him a "lateral" transfer to the Marvin Gardens side of town.

The worst part of King City, forgotten by all but the people who lived there. A lot of good people, a lot of bad people, none with any faith in law enforcement. The Chief hoped he'd quit over it.

He didn't understand Tom Wade at all.

A new substation in a former porn movie store, two rookies shunted off on him, and a promise of no back-up. Ever. They were on their own.

Tom went at it with a will. The police needed respect from both the good people and the bad.

The first week he gets a dead body, a young woman killed elsewhere and dumped, and a series of murdered women, all shot over the past couple of years.

Lee Goldberg has written a pretty good novel here. One hopes it will lead to more down the road.

K says

Lee Goldberg is a talented author who knows how to move a story along in a rapid and linear fashion. In King City, he's crafted another very entertaining vehicle for his police Sgt. Tom Wade.

Tom has an unshakable moral compass that has landed him in a neighborhood known as Darwin (as in survival of the fittest) Gardens, as punishment for having exposed corruption in his department. Since the Chief couldn't fire Wade, he moved him laterally (same rank & pay) into the one place that the cops had deserted in hopes of forcing Wade's resignation.

The plot is pretty apparent and Goldberg writes his books like they could become a screenplay at any moment. No jumping around between past and present or swapping POV's need apply. It's straight down the middle and pedal to the metal here, and loads of fun.

Wade is a fine hero figure who adapts his policing to his environment. He moves into Darwin Gardens to demonstrate his belief that the poor are equal under the law and just as entitled to justice as the rich. He stands up to the local drug lord and manages to win his grudging respect, along with the affection of a local lass.

No surprises here, just a ripping good ol' fashioned yarn that winds up leaving plenty of room for additional installments of Tom Wade. I look forward to them— perhaps you will as well.

Nikki Wilde says

I did not want to put this down. I love when authors can blend serious situations with humor. I realized early on that I never should have picked this up during a weeknight. So consider yourself warned, if you're thinking about starting this one, it might be a good idea to start thinking up a good reason to call into work the next day.

Major Crimes Unit detective Tom Wade took down several of his fellow officers for corruption. As a reward he lost everything. Sent to the worst part of King City to "clean up the streets" Tom knows he's in over his head. The last two cops that accidentally drove into King City were gunned down in their vehicle. Now he's fighting for his life and for his beliefs.

I've heard a lot of people say this was like a modern day western. I have to admit I've never watched or read a western so I can't really attest to that. I can attest that I had so much fun with this book. It was very interesting and every step of the way you're wondering what's coming next. I have to admit I wasn't able to predict much, if anything on this one.

It was a wild and almost stressful ride all the way though. I feel like there may be more to come from Tom Wade. I hope that might be the case. It's excellent as a standalone but I feel like it would work as a series as well. I would definitely read more of Tom.

Mike says

Tom Wade is a cop driven by doing what's right. So while he's not beholden to every rule and law he's ever met, the corruption in the major crimes unit he's assigned is too much to overlook. He secretly helps the justice department build a case against the others, and when their successful prosecutions are over and the dust settles, is promptly given a "lateral move" by a police chief who felt Tom should have come to him so things could be "handled quietly."

Tom's sent into a part of King City so bad it no longer has an official name on the map so it can be more easily forgotten, with only two unwanted rookies for staff (one who is the definition of unexceptional and one who has the "gall" not to be while also being a woman and black) and the thinly veiled insinuation that there will be no backup, no support, and no hope.

The brilliance of Goldberg's tale in Tom's approach to the difficulties that arise, and a writing style that provides vivid detail while keeping everything moving at a compelling pace. Tom doesn't care about opinion nor playing nice, just about doing his job and sees his exile into the area nicknamed Darwin Gardens as a chance to do police work somewhere where it will matter. The procedural, mystery and relationship elements all rise naturally from the story and characters and blend amazingly well. I read a lot and often get caught up in finishing a good book, but I can honestly say this is the first in years I literally spent every free moment I had reading from the second I started.

A captivating, excellent police procedural with a fascinating main character and a tremendous supporting cast.

Harvey says

I knew of Lee Goldberg from his TV work and "lighter" novelizations. I'm very glad I found this "harder" crime story (via my Goodreads friend Randy Johnson).

This is a modern "Western" where pariah cop Tom Wade is sent to "tame" the worst neighborhood of this (fictional) gritty metropolis. And tame it he does.

A fun ride. I hope Goldberg will do more of these.

Skip says

I liked this book because it was a lot of fun. Lee Goldberg is a tv writer, and the book seems quite visual because of his descriptive writing. The hero and the city are both down on their luck: the hero by choice for going to the feds about corruption in the city's Major Crimes Unit, and the neighborhood due to closed factories and the resulting poverty. Yet, with his unwavering efforts to do the right thing, the hero (Tom Wade), returns law and order to the crime-ridden area one step at a time, assisted by two rookies, using his unorthodox approach. My two favorites lines: "with the fall of the factories, the towers had gone from swanky to skanky" and the protagonist's "what's important is what you stand for and how strong you stand for it."

Sarah says

4.5 stars

"The last few weeks had been a long hard slog. Plenty of issues at home and at work to keep the stress levels topped out, and now the surgeon had her sidelined for two weeks. Without the gym as a distraction and without that regular shot of endorphins, she thought, this will be a damned long two weeks.

"I need something to read," she thinks, "something different from the last few titles..". She runs through the titles in her Kindle app. "Too heavy on reality. Both the fictional and the real, tortured by demons evil or benign.. It's time for something or somewhere to escape to.. Her next one's out in July.. his in November... Oh yeah, True Fiction was a rollicking good read. Let's see what else Lee Goldberg has up his sleeve.

Hmm.. his next Ian Ludlow won't be out for months.. The Walk looks like waaay too much dystopia for this week. What's this King City? Sounds like it might fill the bill. Like his alter ego says in True Fiction, he can plot. A good tale well told, strong characters, a gritty setting, fast paced, can't-put-it-down action. Just what the doctor ordered."

A great, fast read, lost 1/2 a star for some sloppy editing and a cringy flashback scene.

Connie Flynn says

A good cop is ostracized by his corrupt unit and banished to the 'hell' of neighborhoods run by a ruthless

kingpin that he's determined to turn around. He's blessed (or cursed) with two raw rookies who he must protect. I, along with the good cop, held my breath that he would succeed before he got killed.

This entertaining book is another example of Lee Goldberg's skill. It contains moderate violence and a light love story. I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Ed says

While reading this cop novel, I couldn't help but think of FORT APACHE, THE BRONX, the 1981 movie starring Paul Newman I saw at the theater. Since I'm a big Newman fan, I found KING CITY to be an entertaining read. Like FORT APACHE, KING CITY is about a satellite police station house set in the middle of the rough ghetto/slum part of town. Tom Wade is exiled to Darwin Gardens after blowing the whistle to the feds about his dirty fellow cops. He's assigned two rookie cops and pretty much left out there to twist in the wind. Wade is a straight-talking, tough-as-whit-leather cop who is determined to make a difference. The pace is fast, and the writing sharp. This might be a series, and if so, well worth following.

Jim A says

Pretty good story about a police officer who testifies against his squad for corruption. The result is being posted to an area of town that nobody wants to have anything to do with. From there it's a 'feel good' story. He and his two fellow officers, both rookies also sent to Siberia, solve a murder, bring in a serial killer and find the people responsible for the ambush of police officers.

No great literary breakthrough here, just a fun read from Goldberg. And if it's from Goldberg, one can expect some tongue in cheek humor.

Zoë Sharp says

King City effortlessly blends the archetypal gunslinger of the Old West, riding into the lawless town to clean up the bad guys, with a modern tale of police corruption, urban decay and neglect....It's a fast-paced exploration of the decline of the blue-collar industrial heartland of America, and the cop who will not stand by and let that happen on his watch. Fans of the late Robert B Parker will delight in King City, which has the same great dialogue and nicely judged wry humour....A sit-down, straight-through read. Superb.

Robert S Booker says

Good fast read

A good fast read. A police no ellis with some interesting settings and attempts to be original with con pets that might be clinched in someone else's hands.

Nathan Shumate says

The exposition can be a little clunky at times, but Goldberg's decades of experience as a TV writer shines through in the whip-smart dialogue. This is the most exciting franchise I've read from him.

Gary Taylor says

Outrageous special effects sabotage a premise of high potential

Any author trying to repackage the classic western theme of a new sheriff in town needs to make a decision: channel the dramatic vibe of *Destry Rides Again* or apply the comedic slapstick of *Blazing Saddles*? In his new novel *King City*, television script writer Lee Goldberg appears headed for *Destry* but instead allows his addiction for special effects to hijack the narrative and ultimately set his saddles ablaze. The result is the unintentionally disappointing creation of a comic book hero without flaws who performs impossible feats of derring-do while solving a trifecta of murder cases just in time to take his teenage daughter to a movie--all without breaking a sweat. C'mon, Lee! But wait, there is more bad news: Goldberg already has a sequel in the works to give his new hero--outcast King City police sergeant Tom Wade--an encore. I hope he's not thinking franchise.

To clarify, *King City* is neither a western, nor a comedy. And, to be fair, the novel boasts enough pluses to merit consideration. The writing is solid, the wisecracking dialogue is clever and the premise is intriguing. The first chapter introduces Tom Wade as the most righteous cop in Washington's contemporary King City because he has just cooperated with the feds in a probe of corruption at the city police department. Now an immediate outcast in the department for this betrayal of his brethren in blue, Wade is assigned to head operations at the newly created police substation in the aptly named Darwin Gardens, a poverty-stricken neighborhood equally abandoned by the city and left to the control of a vicious crime lord. Because every Batman needs a Robin, two rookie cops are assigned to assist Wade in the Jimmy Stewart/Cleavon Little role as the new sheriff in this nasty little town within King City. So far, so good, for me.

But I started to grow suspicious when Wade responds to his first confrontation with the local gang by shooting up the Escalade driven by the gang leader and then shooting his new rookie partner in his bulletproof vest just to demonstrate its strength. The special effects continue to escalate as Wade works to solve several unrelated homicides. To use TV terms Goldberg would appreciate, this novel jumped the shark for me when Wade managed to secure a confession from one of King City's aristocrats with only a rhetorical trick, solving the first of three murder cases. "Wow, I didn't see that coming," exclaims Wade's rookie partner, a Robin now thoroughly in awe of his Batman. Goldberg's climactic special effect occurs when Wade drives a car through the front of the crime lord's strip joint during a shootout with the gang.

Because the crime lord escaped unscathed, we can assume future installments of this adventure will focus on Wade's continuing efforts to neutralize him. Here's my suggestion: I'd be more interested in a prequel that explores the anxiety and pressures of a cop forced to blow the whistle on his corrupt colleagues. Perhaps Wade should have a drinking problem, as well, just to give him a little bit of a flaw that makes him more human. No special effects need apply.

Rob says

Straight-talking, fast-moving, cop thriller right out of the great US tradition of the genre.

The author, Lee Goldberg, is a veteran of crime drama on TV and in print and it shows.

This is crisply written with a heavy dose of black humour, and vivid characters.

Goldberg is hard at work on more Tom Wade novels - I'm looking forward to them.
