



A Killer in the Wind

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Three years ago, working vice for the NYPD, Dan Champion uncovered a sex slavery ring run by a kingpin known only as the Fat Woman. Obsessed with bringing her down, Champion infiltrated a world of sexual obsession and perversity. He broke the case, but the case also broke him. He started taking drugs and soon began to form hallucinations...a dead child prowling the streets of New York...a beautiful woman named Samantha who would have given him the love he always wanted—if she'd only been real.

Now Champion is a small town detective, chasing burglars and juvenile delinquents, hanging out at the local tavern where he is romancing a waitress. The ghosts and hallucinations are finally behind him as he begins to rebuild his life. Then one night Champion is called to examine the body of a woman who has washed ashore. Yet when he looks at her face, he sees that it's Samantha, the woman he dreamed about long ago...a woman who doesn't exist.

Suddenly, Champion is haunted again, only this time it's by a team of expert killers who want to make sure he never finds the truth: the truth about the dead child who wanders through his imagination; the truth about the lover who inhabits his dreams; and the truth about a killer who has been on the run — in the wind — for a lifetime. The ghosts of the dead are all around him, and Champion has to find out who murdered them, fast, or he could become one of them himself.

A Killer in the Wind Details

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From Reader Review A Killer in the Wind for online ebook

Julie says

I didn't like the ploy of the drug this guy took as a way of telling most of the story. Kind of like being clairvoyant -an easy trick to advance the plot. It just didn't work for me. Not a bad plot, but the way it was written didn't appeal to me.

Jordyn Redwood says

I was interested in reading Andrew's work because he'd been nominated five times and twice won the Edgar Award.

Mr. Klavan does not disappoint.

A Killer in the Wind is the story of detective Dan Champion and his obsession with a criminal known as the Fat Woman. Little does he know that their stories are very intertwined.

Overall, a great story. The only reason I'm giving four versus five stars is the large sections of backstory that did slow the pace of the novel.

I do look forward to reading more of his books.

Gloria Feit says

There is a long history of hard-boiled detectives, but Dan Champion is unlike any of them in this eerie novel. To begin with, he doesn't know who he is. Specifically, he has wiped from memory his early childhood and the experiences he underwent. However, he became a top-notch homicide detective with the NYPD until it became advisable for him to leave after shooting a suspect.

So he hooks up with a small sheriff's department in upstate New York, again showing his talent in law enforcement. Then the body of a woman washes up on the shores of the Hudson River, bringing his past to the fore, and the plot thickens.

There can be no question that Andrew Klavan can construct an interesting and unusual story. He has proven that several times. But in the case of this book, perhaps, he has overdone the bizarre. There is plenty of violence and psychological suspense, often straining credulity. The story thrives on Champion's inability to distinguish between fantasy and reality. And therein lies the rub: Is that a plus or minus for the reader? On the whole, it is an asset, and therefore the book is recommended.

Dan says

A real page-turner for its first two-thirds, it bogged down at the end and lost all its momentum. The author, who was totally in control, suddenly got in the way of his own story.

And boy, am I tired of this trend for almost all thrillers to have some child abuse theme. We've so pushed the limits of immorality, that the only thing still left as immoral is harming children, thus it makes its way into every novel when a writer has to shock readers. Honestly, it's getting old, and the dust jacket description does not hint at this theme.

Naomi says

Read my full review @ <http://bit.ly/SdFiZa>

My opinion: Holy cow, Batman...this book rocked. It was a slower read to me because the author had intricately woven hallucinations/the past and the present MASTERFULLY.

I found this book somewhat reminiscent of one of my favorite Val McDermid books, *A PLACE OF EXECUTION*, in its' shocking twists and deep, deep character development.

I became familiar with this author through his appearances on Red Eye with Greg Gutfeld and his posts on Breitbart.com. NEVER did I think his talent to write would have been this deep, this intense that would leave me mouth opened at the end!

Bravo, Mr. Klavan, Bravo!! I can't wait to read more by you!

James Glass says

I picked this book up at the library because the story piqued my interest. The author is also a two-time Edgar Award winner.

It's about a disgraced mentally unstable NYPD cop (Dan Champion) who is determined to uncover a criminal empire run by a kingpin only known as The Fat Woman.

Klavan has some great writing skills, but the story seemed choppy to me, if that makes sense. Although the plots were fast-paced, the protagonist, Champion seemed too arrogant. I also didn't feel any sympathy or compassion toward any of the characters. Maybe the next book I read by Andrew Klavan will be better.

Shelley Fearn says

Oh, Mr. Klavan. You have written an exciting book with an excellent premise. A NYPD detective goes undercover to bust up a pedophile ring. Unable to cope with the brutal nature of the crime he turns to drugs

to help him to sleep. He soon is haunted by ghosts. While taking down the criminals he shoots and kills one of the suspects and is let go from the police force.

Relocating to a small town outside the city he is attacked by hired assassins. Now he has to figure out why they want him and what he knows. To do so, he must remember long lost parts of his childhood when he himself was held by the same pedophiles he has tried to destroy.

It was a good story but the use of drugs was over the top. He shot and killed the subject while on a drug he calls, "zattera". When he wakes in the hospital the doctor tells him that "it makes you as nutty as a fruitcake". Then later in the book, "to remember" his past Champion starts popping pills again all the while driving all over New York and Pennsylvania. Really? Mr. Klaven, couldn't Champion go to a psychiatrist like a normal person? It certainly would be safer for the general public.

Steven says

A fun book; keeps you on the edge of your seat until the very end. It gets a little long and repetitive when the author delves into the mind of Dan Champion the protagonist and the current effects of his past drug use. Couldn't help but root for Champion and Samantha against the super bad and scary looking expert killers.

Bonnie Brody says

This very well-written mystery contains a sense of eerie other-worldliness from the beginning. It goes from the present to the past in time, telling the story of Dan Champion, ex NYPD vice detective. He is now working in a small NY town called Tyler, having been fired from NYPD for killing an unarmed man.

The story starts off with Dan's obsession with The Fat Woman, a woman he believes is responsible for a ring of pedophiles and killing young children. Dan befriends one of The Fat Woman's clients named Emory and gets Emory to believe he is truly a pedophile himself. Emory sets up a meeting where Dan is to have his first encounter with a child and it is there that Dan kills him.

Because of the horror of this case, Dan could not sleep for weeks. He secured a drug called 'z' that the FDA did not approve because of hallucinations and aggression. The 'z' helped Dan sleep but he hallucinated, seeing a small boy named Alexander and a woman named Samantha who helped him withdraw from this drug. Are these hallucinations all in Dan's head or could they be real, partially or totally. Dan falls in love with Samantha, but just as he gets well, she disappears.

The story goes back and forth in time, from the present to the past so that we know what Dan faced and is currently facing. It is not long into the story that a woman is found washed up in Tyler and when Dan checks it out he sees it is Samantha. Samantha disappears once again but not before warning Dan that people are after him.

This is a mystery with gothic tones and a very literary bent. The characters are well drawn out and I felt that I knew Dan and what made him tick. He believes with all his heart that Samantha is real and that she is the one love of his life.

The mystery gets rough and tumble as Dan fights for the truth and for his life. I highly recommend this book for mystery lovers who like a bit of spice and difference thrown in.

Victoria says

Wow! From nearly the very first page, I fell in love with this book! Dan Champion's stream-of-consciousness narration felt so real, startlingly charming and even humourous in parts. The writing style would certainly make for a wonderful audio version! The humour continued into the bantering dialogue between Dan and his fellow officers, which added to that sense of reality. It was really a thrilling read and one that I read in one sitting with its non-stop action and sympathetic characters and hatable villains. The book concluded with a bit of an openness to it, but in a surprisingly satisfactory way - though my fingers are crossed that Klavan may return to chronicle more of Champion's adventures. I really enjoyed reading this book. The hero was very well crafted and the book was certainly exciting! Even the supporting characters came to life and though the villains had an almost comic-book villainy to them, it worked so well here without feeling silly. I completely loved reading this and I can't wait to see what Klavan publishes next - I definitely plan on exploring his past releases, too!

Lisa B. says

My Thoughts

Outstanding!

What a roller coaster ride this was. My heart is still pounding from the last 50 pages. I thought the author did a great job of writing a fast paced, twisted mystery. Quite different from anything I have read recently and I am looking forward to reading more from this author. I love it when I find books like this that are from authors who are new to me.

Congrats Mr. Kravan!

Thank you to Grove/Atlantic, Inc. and Netgalley for allowing me to read this in exchange for an unbiased review.

Publish date: January 8, 2013.

Stephen Gallup says

How many Klavan novels have I read now? It would take a while to add 'em up. I like him. I like his focus on the presence of evil in our society and its effect on people who are either innocent or are at least trying to lead decent lives. I think his motivation in writing is a belief that this effect is a real and urgent problem.

I also think he tells a good story. Sometimes the stories lean more toward being thrillers and away from the above very serious theme. But any writer hoping to get broad exposure needs to be entertaining. I seriously

doubt there is much market for literature that has a more overtly moral message than this.

A Killer in the Wind is not my favorite Klavan novel. That honor probably goes to *Empire of Lies*, which has a wonderfully touching conclusion, among other features. But it's just as thrilling as that one. There are points in the story at which the tension reached near-painful levels for me (e.g., when Dan Champion is tied up in the trunk of a car, being transported to a dire fate that has already been described to him). I agree with another reviewer's objection to the use of a drug for accessing buried memories. That part was a little unconvincing. On the other hand, the author's narration in the audiobook is just about perfect. He knows precisely the effect he wants to achieve, and gives it his all.

Andrew Klavan is on the short list of authors I would really like to meet. But at any rate I will continue reading his books.

Lauren Smith says

This review was posted on my blog, Violin in a Void

A Killer in the Wind hooked me with the first chapter. I really liked the writing – brash and hardboiled, sardonically relating tragedy and violence. It's sort of serious without being entirely serious, and I thought it promised an entertaining read. We immediately get a heroic portrait of Champion, but then this is soon undermined by flashback chapters that tell his New York story. Suddenly, we see Champion miserable, stressed and discouraged. He might be doing good work, but he succumbs to drug addiction, and his one heroic moment is also one of his greatest failures. I liked this too; the contrast between current Champion and past Champion intrigued me, and I love a dark and dirty past.

I particularly liked the suggestion that Champion's heroism is a facade: his name is so prosaic, that opening chapter was a little too cool, and the New York story shows us that he's not quite the man he seems to be at first. I'm not trying to suggest that Champion doesn't do brave and heroic things; he does. He's a good person. But throughout the novel there's a sense that he is who he is because he's trying to live up to his name, to fit himself into his idea of a hero. It's a pretty traditional one – Champion seems to specialise in saving women and children, and he has a bit of trouble dealing with his emotions. His lover Bethany notes that he gets very angry when "someone hurts a child – or a woman, for that matter... or anyone who can't defend themselves". As we eventually find out, this entire story began with Champion trying to be a hero, the one who rescues a damsel in distress from the monsters who would hurt her. It's not always easy: most of the time, Champion is able to be the hero he wants to be, but there are also many times when he fails – we see him terrified, vulnerable, and deranged, unable to defeat Stark or the Fat Woman.

So yeah, I like what Klavan did with Champion's character, playing around with the concept of the hero, the champion. It's not revolutionary – Champion is still the traditional hero at the end of the day – but it does add a little something extra to his character. However, despite the positive things I've said so far, you may recall that I only gave this book 5/10. Which means there are some major flaws I need to discuss. The biggest one is that in playing around with idea of the traditional, masculine hero, Klavan has produced some dreadfully traditional women to prop Champion up. They're disempowered, clichéd, and boring.

The first is Bethany, Champion's lover. She's very beautiful and loves Champion, but he can't love her back because he's in love with the woman he once hallucinated. This doesn't bother Bethany much. She's available to tend to his wounds, give him the emotional insights he can't figure out for himself, and be

threatened by Stark so that Champion can swoop in to protect her.

Then there's Samantha. It's a long time before we really learn anything about her. In the first half of the novel, she's imaginary, unconscious or missing. We know only that she's very beautiful. Her most notable features are her auburn hair, and her very white skin. Champion knows her as an angel who comforted him in his time of need, but that might just be his fantasy. When we have proper encounters with Samantha later in the novel, she's almost always a victim – a damsel in distress begging Champion to save her and put an end to these terrible things that are happening to them, or a neurotic mess for whom "being damaged is a full-time job". Samantha shows some strength as an investigator and a survivor, but this is mostly in the backstory; the Samantha we see on the page is a quivering victim offering Champion a golden opportunity to be her hero. It's so ridiculous that I wondered if Champion was hallucinating all his scenes with her, but if that were the case then most of the book could be a hallucination as well.

Finally, there's the Fat Woman, who is both morally and physically monstrous. She's hideously obese, and supposedly has no face. She kidnaps and sells children as sex slaves, so there's really no room for ambiguity here – she's evil. It's pretty common for powerful women to be made monstrous in fiction, but Klavan deals her a double blow – he robs the Fat Woman of her power as a villain. However perverse her business operations, she must undoubtedly be a smart and purposeful person to run a crime ring. When we encounter her however, she's nothing like the evil criminal mastermind I'd expected. She's just a lumbering dope. Her role as Champion's arch-nemesis had long ago been snapped up by Stark who is just one of her thugs. It's so pathetic – the Fat Woman can't even be a good villain; she needs a man to do it for her!

Stark at least makes a decent villain. He certainly has a terrifying appearance (you can identify the bad guys at a glance throughout this novel) – he's so thin he looks like a skeleton, he keeps unnerving Champion with threats of endless torture, and he's got a scary laugh. As a result, he does seem pretty creepy as he stalks Champion. The whole thing is a tad silly though. Champion killed Stark's twin in a lucky act of self-defence; he didn't hunt him down or something. Stark's anger isn't entirely justified; it's more like the product of an insane mind. In fact, Stark doesn't appear to be all that upset about his brother anyway. It's more like he relishes the opportunity to go into psycho vengeance mode. Of course, this means that Stark passes up all opportunities to kill Champion with a simple bullet to the head. No, he has to let Champion live so he can make him suffer, giving our hero ample opportunity to save the day.

All the action that stems from this actually isn't too bad, so I can't fault the novel on that. I also love it when characters uncover dark secrets, and Champion has a few hiding away. But these things couldn't save the novel for me. It started off well, but after Samantha was pulled out of the Hudson it went into a slow decline.

The blurb/marketing copy compares *A Killer in the Wind* to Dennis Lehane's *Shutter Island* and Gillian Flynn's *Sharp Objects*. The comparison is fair in that the protagonists' are all intimately entwined with the mysteries they're trying to solve and their jobs become deeply personal in disturbing ways. But I don't think *A Killer in the Wind* holds a candle to Lehane and Flynn's brilliant crime thrillers. I found both of those memorable novels deeply intriguing, shocking, and tense and *Shutter Island* is one of the best novels I've had the pleasure of reading. *A Killer in the Wind* was never remotely as thrilling. Admittedly, the plot does deviate from crime thriller norms in some ways, but not enough. I think many readers could easily enjoy this, but it just didn't work for me.

For more reviews of speculative fiction, literary fiction, and the occasional crime novel, check out my blog *Violin in a Void*

Sherri says

Someone I respect very much recommended this book, so I plowed through despite my initial misgivings. I wish I hadn't.

Of course it's satisfying in a way to have the bad guys (and in this book they are VERY bad) get what's coming to them. And the book ends on a somewhat hopeful note, despite its darkness. I might have given it three stars.

But.

I *really* disliked the treatment of women in this novel. Specifically, I was increasingly horrified at Champion's treatment of Samantha, culminating in what I can only call rape in the abandoned hospital. She said no, but he did not relent. She was severely traumatized by a childhood full of abuse, and the one person she thought she could trust just...doesn't listen when she says no? No wonder she's suicidal.

Ugh.

Bonnie Schroeder says

A preposterous premise marred this otherwise interesting tale of an obsessed detective with some lost-memory issues. The action sequences are well crafted and the central puzzle was intriguing but with a flimsy base. Characters did inexplicable things and changed behavior without any believable groundwork to explain the switch.
